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**PENDIDIKAN DASAR DI IRIAN JAYA:  
SEBUAH LAPORAN KUALITATIF**

**Ikhtisar**

Tujuan dari laporan ini adalah untuk memberikan gambaran tentang keadaan pendidikan dasar yang ada di desa-desa pedalaman Irian Jaya dan untuk mengusulkan rencana peningkatannya. Laporan ini sangat bersifat impresionisme dan kualitatif karena sulit mendapatkan sejumlah data yang dibutuhkan untuk mendiskusikan persoalan di atas.

Laporan ini mendiskusikan persoalan yang berhubungan dengan kurikulum, rintangan bahasa, jumlah pelajar yang putus sekolah, kekurangan guru, peraturan pemerintah, harapan orang tua dan sampai di mana usaha yang telah dilakukan. Baik alasan maupun akibat dari persoalan ini, didiskusikan dalam laporan ini.

**PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IRIAN JAYA:  
A QUALITATIVE BACKGROUND REPORT  
WITH A PROPOSED STRATEGY<sup>o</sup>**

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0. Introduction
1. Constraints in the Existing Situation
2. Proposed Strategy
3. Conclusion

**0. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to give a picture of the existing situation of primary education in the inland villages of Irian Jaya and to propose a strategy for improving the same. The report is mostly impressionistic and qualitative in nature.<sup>1</sup>

This report discusses problems related to curriculum, language barrier, dropout rate of students, shortage of teachers, government regulations, parental expectations and attempts made so far. Both the reasons for and results of these problems are discussed.

**1.CONSTRAINTS IN THE EXISTING SITUATION**

The thesis<sup>2</sup> of this report is as follows: the National System of Education, especially on the primary level, is not adapted to the sociocultural context and daily living situations of the pupils in Irian Jaya. It is not yet capable of improving the knowledge and skills of the people in those areas to enable them to improve their socioeconomic condition and the quality of their lives in general.

At a 1985 official meeting on 'The Development of Long Term Education in Irian Jaya,' it was generally agreed that this thesis reflects the existing situation in the highlands and remote coastal areas of Irian Jaya.<sup>3</sup>

**1.1 Curriculum**

The reasons for the present situation are many. One of the factors involved is the orientation of the system of primary

education itself. It is based on outsiders' viewpoints of what local people need. It follows a curriculum and a number of teaching methods that are imported from other more developed areas in Indonesia.<sup>4</sup> In a Rapat Kerja in 1986, Lewar and Tethool stated that 'kurikulum 1984,' i.e. the National Curriculum that is being used now in all primary schools in Indonesia, is difficult to apply in Irian Jaya due to local customs and the low level of basic competence of the local students. Despite this, they stated, the National Curriculum has to be carried out because the government has not made room for a special curriculum for Irian Jaya.<sup>5</sup> In other words, up till now not much has been done to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods to the local situation. All of the students, regardless of ethnic and regional differences, receive the same kind of standardized education in preparation for province-wide, even nationwide examinations. As a result, education in village schools degenerates into a uniform training for final examinations that is aimed at secondary school entrance and not village life.

Since the content and rationale of primary education is drawn from other parts of Indonesia, the major emphasis is on providing candidates for secondary and higher education and on catering to the presumed needs of public service. It is geared toward students becoming teachers or officials; it reinforces the idea that education is for the select few who will get outside jobs. However, the majority of students drop out, fail the final examinations or simply can not go on to secondary schools for various reasons. Their primary education is not geared in terms of contributing to the development of their community. Greiwe (1973) reported that one agency had experienced a gap between their development program and the goals of the children.<sup>6</sup> This confirms the fact that primary education in Irian Jaya is indeed geared toward students becoming teachers or officials outside their own villages, even though this might also be due to the fact that young children in general have unrealistic ideas of future employment.

What the students learn in school, i.e. reading, writing, arithmetic/mathematics, geography, history, etc. doesn't seem to have anything in common with the daily living reality in the village. This shows that there is no concern for the indigenous local culture and society in the education program. Too much attention is given to schools with little or no concern for the whole man -- the whole society in relation to social, economic and cultural development. This results in an unbalanced education system, i.e. an overconcentration on the younger segment of society who have very little influence, prestige or status and the neglect of adults who do have influence, power, prestige or status.

## 1.2 Language Barrier

A second major problem in education in Irian Jaya is the language barrier between staff and students which results in a very high dropout rate. Some students, and in many places many students, drop out before finishing primary school. Very few pass their final exams. In a recent interview I was informed by a teacher who has worked in the highlands for over twenty years that out of a hundred or more students that took a final examination, no one passed. I was also informed that in many places it has been the practice of teachers to help their students pass by raising the grades from failing to passing. I don't know how many teachers do this, but they do it to save their own and their schools' reputations. Many of those students who drop out and those that fail their final examinations feel restless and frustrated. They are alienated from their surroundings; the education they received does not help them to reenter village life with fresh enthusiasm. Some of them move to coastal towns and add to the increasing number of unskilled and unemployed young people living on meager incomes of their fellow tribesmen.<sup>7</sup> Those who don't move to towns can no longer adjust to their environment; they are disobedient to their parents and have little respect for their traditional elders and the old values. Unfortunately they haven't found any new values to substitute for the old ones.

The high dropout rate is caused by a language problem. Language in many places is a problem in the early grades because the children do not know Bahasa Indonesia and the teachers who are from other areas or from the coastal areas do not know the local language. In one case cited in Greiwe (1973) it is reported that one of the teachers used the vernacular in the first grade and his class made better progress than others.<sup>8</sup> Gosal from Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Gereja-gereja Injili, Irian Jaya (YPPGI), informed me in 1985 that some of their schools introduced reading in some of the local languages in grade zero (kelas nol) prior to first grade.

One of the specific problems in an Indonesian primary school with a standardized national curriculum is that the teacher cannot communicate with students who do not know Indonesian. In many places, where the primary education target is on the first generation level, remote village children enter school knowing little or no Indonesian. They sometimes spend years finishing first grade because they first have to try to understand what the teacher is saying.

Teaching reading for comprehension is also a problem for these children in remote villages. While monolingual children in the interior learn phrases here and there of Indonesian, they also struggle to learn to read Indonesian by rote, sounding out the words. They learn to read the words by sounding out the syllables without the slightest notion of their meanings.

On the other hand, when students are taught first to read and write in their mother tongue, they read from the start about things meaningful to them in their everyday life -- words, simple phrases and sentences which they use, for example, while watching the baby when their mother goes to the garden or to the river. Consequently, the teacher is able to work toward reading for comprehension from the very first lessons; in this way the concept of reading is established.

### 1.3 Shortage of Teachers

It is reported that not all school-age children go to school and that not all schools are in a position to function as they should. This is due to a general shortage of teachers for primary and secondary schools, especially in the remote areas. Roughly only 50% of the required staff are employed. Teachers have been recruited from other parts of Indonesia, but this remedy has met with only limited success because teachers from the coastal areas and other parts of the country are reluctant to work in remote highland areas.<sup>10</sup> As a result of this shortage of teachers, only 50% of school-age children attend primary schools in this province.<sup>11</sup>

Isolation, lack of conveniences and lack of knowledge of the local languages and customs are hindrances to recruiting teachers.<sup>12</sup> There are many remote locations where the adjustment for Indonesian-speaking teachers would be severe. Not only might the teachers from outside the language group be looked upon with suspicion by the villagers, but isolation in a jungle setting might subject the teachers to severe culture shock if they are not specially trained and highly motivated for the task. In spite of these difficulties, these teachers are expected to be highly dedicated and highly motivated. Unfortunately, many are not oriented, let alone trained, for their tasks in remote areas.

These hindrances to recruiting are the problems underlying the lack of teachers. Shortage of teachers in turn contributes to the lowering of the quality of education. This is confirmed in one report<sup>13</sup> that states while equal opportunity for education has been achieved, the improvement of the quality of education has not yet been achieved. The same report states that the adding of the number of school buildings was done without adding to the number of teachers at the same time.

The severity of the shortage of teachers is heightened by the fact that at present more and more teachers tend to work at government schools, even though in reality private foundations have more schools and more students than does the government. This tendency is caused by the government school system offering better financial support to teachers and administrators than do the private schools. That is why the Catholic primary school (SD-YPPK) in Bomamani Pania, for example, has 130 students with only three teachers teaching six classes, whereas the SD Inpres

government primary school in the same area has 48 students with 11 teachers teaching six classes.<sup>14</sup>

Besides the above reasons why teachers are reluctant to work in the highlands is the fact that their salaries and rank promotions are always handled late. Also they are rarely visited by private school inspectors or by government inspectors.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.4 Government Regulations

Government regulations and decrees do not offer any flexibility within the system of primary education other than some leeway in providing adequate financial support for schools and teachers. Government regulation No. 4, 1950, decrees that private schools must submit to government regulations regarding education. This was later reinforced by Government Regulation No. 28, 1981, which states that government regulations regarding education apply to all types of private schools. The coverage then extended -- by a joint decree of three ministers -- to all provinces in the Republic of Indonesia without exception or special dispensation.<sup>16</sup> These regulations make it very difficult for primary education in Irian Jaya to be adapted to the sociocultural contexts and daily living situations of the people. Somehow government policy-makers in education must come to terms with the fact that primary education in the highlands of Irian Jaya will have to be contextualized in order for the local people to fully take part in the development. This has several implications. First, the government should be willing to second their teachers to the many privately-run schools lest many of these schools be closed down.<sup>17</sup> Second, the government should exempt Irian Jaya from the two above mentioned regulations and especially from the joint decree by the three ministers. Third, lack of effective communication between private foundations and the government (i.e. the Department of Education and Culture) due to insufficient funds and manpower and incompetency in carrying out the monitoring and evaluation of government policies in private schools should be improved.<sup>18</sup> If this is not done, the problems faced by the private schools in the highlands will never be understood by government policy-makers. If these problems are not understood then nothing can be done to solve or even minimize them.

### 1.5 Parental Expectations

In some regencies (kabupatens), students have problems with school attendance due to their parents' lack of motivation and their economic situation which is tied up in a semi-nomadic lifestyle. That is, when parents go into the jungle to make gardens, their children accompany them.

In terms of expectations of the parents and the traditional elite toward education in the highlands, there are two types of prevalent attitudes:<sup>19</sup>

- a) A very high hope for children's futures. These parents usually look forward to the time when their children will return from higher education in the towns with the promise of goods and money to be divided among those at home. These parents will be greatly disappointed if these high expectations are not met.
- b) A questioning of education. These parents often do not see what use education can be in their society, especially when they observe the results of such schooling in the attitudes of school dropouts.

#### 1.6 Attempts Made So Far

Discussed above are mostly problems encountered on the field and their reasons and results. Fortunately, some efforts have been made to solve these problems over the past few years. In the Catholic school system the shortage of teachers has been remedied through the recruitment of teachers from other parts of Indonesia even though with limited success as mentioned earlier. Two other ways of solving this problem of a lack of teachers in the Catholic school system are through a) appointing all SPG (Teacher Training School) graduates through letters of appointment as civil servants seconded to private schools, and b) offering scholarships to third-year students of SPG on condition that they work as teachers for the Catholic School Foundation.<sup>21</sup> Problems<sup>22</sup> encountered with these two avenues are the fact that 1) more and more civil servants seconded to private schools in certain regencies are now being withdrawn and placed in government schools (in the regencies of Jayapura, Jayawijaya and Paniai, however, teachers nominated as civil servants are now being seconded back to the private schools), and 2) some of the scholarship students of the SPG's in Jayapura and Merauke upon graduation are nominated as civil servants and placed in government schools instead of being seconded to the Catholic schools for which the scholarships were intended.

In 1973 Greiwe<sup>22</sup> reported how the Catholic mission solved the problem of primary education in the Asmat area that was Western oriented:

- 1) The existing system of education was reevaluated and given a new direction to bring it in line with the goal of total development, e.g. greater concentration on the adult segment of society was stressed with the provision of vocational training on the youth level.
- 2) The expansion of primary schools was halted due to the shortage of teachers and lack of adequate facilities. Nine of the seventeen primary schools continued with the six-year program in villages where the degree of development justified the longer period of schooling. The other eight primary schools which were in villages where less development had occurred were reduced to a

three-year program. Primary schools would be opened in villages only on the basis of corresponding development.

- 3) The quality of teachers and schools was upgraded, i.e. for the upper three classes a policy of screening and selection was implemented to provide opportunities for more capable and promising students.
- 4) General education was extended to six years of primary schooling and three years of secondary.

## 2. PROPOSED STRATEGY

It goes without saying that all education results in the loosening of the ties between children and their parents and immediate surroundings. In a developing society, this type of change is desirable. This is why in regards to education in inland villages, we are confronted with a two-sided problem. On one hand, education should be adapted to the socioeconomic and cultural needs of the local people. On the other hand, the development of a particular society may require the loosening of environmental and traditional ties. Some of the early generation students should be trained to go on to advanced education but this can not be done without disturbing deeply-rooted relations.

This implies that primary education in the highlands should be changed. I propose that it consist of two stages:<sup>23</sup>

- 1) The first stage consists of the basic three grades of the village primary school. It should be compulsory for every child and should be adapted to the specific needs of the children, i.e. that of a community living in a particular area.
- 2) The second stage consists of the remaining three years for those few who possess the capability for further education. They should be gathered into a Central Boarding School where concentrated attention should be paid to the use of the Indonesian language, to active self-expression, to abstract thinking and the expansion of the students' outlook.

The great majority, who will remain living in their original societies, will continue their schooling in the village with special emphasis on the needs of their particular societies. These needs vary with the situation as to place and time and the development and mode of living:

- a) In agricultural societies, such as the Danis, these final years should be devoted to practical work such as the raising of cattle and other livestock, the making of fish ponds, etc. -- all of which should be guided by simple theoretical knowledge. It should be noted that the

establishing of special school farms does not seem to further educational ends since they are often regarded as "playgrounds" or as private sources of income for some people.

- b) In other districts such as where the Ekagis are, the final years of primary education might profitably be spent in acquiring basic information and practice in entrepreneurship, business and cooperatives.

The curriculum for these concluding years should be flexible so that it can always be adapted to changing circumstances. In this way village schools will hopefully be free from the burden of final examinations. The normal course of the school will end in village life and primary education will play its part in the development of the district. In other words, the local people will become active participants in the development of their own areas.

For primary education to be adapted to the cultural needs of the people, especially in the first stage discussed above, the medium of instruction should be in the local language of the students. The reason for this is clearly stated in a 1953 UNESCO report:

"It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue . . . we re-commend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage as possible."<sup>24</sup>

True, in most cases a prestige language such as Bahasa Indonesia will have the greatest economic and social advantage for the inland village students of Irian Jaya. The argument for the vernacular, however, is that it is the best means of ensuring a satisfactory adjustment or bridge to the prestige language. There is a generation gap if the acculturation process is too rapid. This can often be alleviated by the use of the vernacular before the prestige language in education, thus avoiding a forced rapid acculturation.<sup>25</sup> This has already happened in Irian Jaya, however I don't think it is too late to do some adaptation in the system of primary education.

Bilingual education, i.e. the use of the vernacular at the first stage and Bahasa Indonesia at the second stage, has the goal of solving the following practical problems:<sup>26</sup>

- 1) Communication between teacher and students,
- 2) Finding teachers able to fit in with the local culture, and
- 3) Effecting a literacy program in which a student would learn to read with comprehension both for pleasure and for information.

The basic principles used in the bilingual education program are:<sup>27</sup>

- 1) The teachers are local people who speak the native language of their students,
- 2) The students are first taught in their native language, and
- 3) The students then learn the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, in order to interact with fellow countrymen from other groups and to play an active, intelligent role in the affairs of their country.

In the bilingual primary education proposed, the vernacular should be used:

- 1) To initiate the child into school life,
- 2) To teach the process of reading,
- 3) As a tool for oral learning of Bahasa Indonesia,
- 4) As a diglot in advanced materials in arithmetic/mathematics and social studies so that the student can understand the concepts being taught in Bahasa Indonesia,
- 5) By the teacher to make explanations of material being taught in Bahasa Indonesia for the advanced classes which are using material in that language, and
- 6) For the writing of ethnic histories, legends, poetry, ballads and other vernacular literature that reflects the distinct ethnic identity.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, the prestige language, Bahasa Indonesia, should be used:

- 1) As a second language which is introduced orally,
- 2) For reading and writing after the process has been learned in the vernacular,
- 3) As another system for talking about material learned in arithmetic/mathematics and social studies, and
- 4) As a second language to be learned well through pedagogical materials containing explanations in the vernacular. Bahasa Indonesia should thus be learned well enough so that the student is able to continue his advanced education in this medium.<sup>29</sup>

For the proposed bilingual primary education there are three prerequisites:<sup>30</sup>

- 1) The spoken languages of the village people must become the written languages as well,
- 2) Primers and textbooks must be prepared in those languages, and
- 3) The local people from each language group must be trained as teachers. These prospective teachers must have certain natural ability and a knowledge of both their native language and Bahasa Indonesia.

Since some languages have been reduced to written forms and have had nonformal education (i.e. adult literacy) programs<sup>31</sup>, e.g. Dani, Ekagi, Damal, Berik, Isirawa and Bauzi, the bilingual primary education should start with one or two of these languages as pilot projects.

To train the local people as teachers for the first stage of the bilingual primary school proposed, a teacher training school with specialized curriculum should be established. The subjects covered in such a school should be agriculture, horticulture, raising livestock, inland fisheries, simple technical skills, entrepreneurship, business, cooperatives, public health, nutrition, typing, etc. In this way the need for vocational education could be met at the village level.

For the second stage of the bilingual primary school to be effective and relevant to the cultural and socioeconomic needs of the inland village students, the present SPG curriculum should add a course in practical anthropology. In this way the prospective village teachers graduating from SPG's in Irian Jaya will be able to appreciate the differences in law and tribal customs that prevail throughout the province.

Two books which I highly recommend regarding how to run this bilingual primary education and its accompanying teacher training school are:

1. Larson, Mildred L. and Patricia M. Davis. 1981. Bilingual Education: An Experience in Peruvian Amazonia. Dallas: SIL.
2. Wendell, Margaret M. 1982. Bootstrap Literature: Preliterate Societies Do It Themselves. Dallas: SIL.

I propose a follow-up in the form of a discussion or a seminar on primary education where relevant parties are invited to discuss the viability of the above proposed strategy. Several top papers should be presented along with this strategy.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The bilingual primary education is proposed not only because of its success in Peruvian Amazonia; it is proposed also because it has been tried in Indonesia and has had good results. Most of the high officials in the central government in Jakarta have had a three-year vernacular education at elementary level either in Javanese or Sundanese. Even up to the present day the three-year vernacular education in Javanese and Sundanese is maintained. Primary schools in South Sulawesi also use Buginese and Makassarese in the first three grades as a medium of instruction. During the Dutch rule from 1946 - 1962, Ekagi was used in the Paniai area as a medium of instruction in the beginning years of primary education.<sup>32</sup>

I believe the best solution to the vernacular versus prestige language problem is the exclusive use of neither Bahasa Indonesia nor the vernacular, but the use of the vernacular in the first years of school to pave the way for the learning of Bahasa Indonesia to be used in advanced education.<sup>33</sup>



## NOTES

- 0) This paper was written for the Lavalin International, Irian Jaya Regional Development Planning Study, for a seminar held on February 13 and 14, 1987. Special thanks to Tom Rafetto, Pete Silzer of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and Chris Ajamiseba, my wife, for the computer work and the editing they have done in preparing this report.
- 1) Data concerning exact figures about schools, teachers and students will be collected in the near future.
- 2) cf. Ajamiseba, 1985, p.1.
- 3) It also reflects the existing situation of similar areas in other parts of Indonesia. The meeting where this was discussed was sponsored by the Office of Research and Development, Department of Education and Culture in Cipanas, West Java, September 16 - 20, 1985.
- 4) cf. Duijnsteet 1972 p. 23. Edward Greiwe, writing on "Education and Development in Asmat" in Irian: Bulletin of Irian Jaya Development, Vol II number I, 1973, states that the primary schools in Asmat follow the traditional system of the West.
- 5) See Laporan Hasil Rapat Kerja Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik Irian Jaya, 1986, p.20. Lewar and Tethool should be encouraged that this issue has been addressed at the meeting on the Development of Long Term Education in Irian Jaya, sponsored by the Office of Research and Development, Department of Education and Culture, in Cipanas-Puncak, 17 - 19 September, 1985. Hopefully a practical and relevant curriculum would be produced in the near future.
- 6) cf. Setitit in a discussion with Adrian, Greiwe and Kasiran in Greiwe 1973, pp. 95 - 96.
- 7) It would be important to do research on this to find out how many there are and to provide them with some type of skill-oriented training, something like the brigade training done in Botswana. In this way we could reduce the level of criminal activity in the cities. We may also reduce, if not eliminate, the negative sociopolitical impact that has affected our province for so long.
- 8) cf. Adrian in a discussion with Trenkenschuh and Lang in Greiwe 1973, p. 95.
- 9) Irian Jaya Mission Report to the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Development, Cooperation, The Hague, December 1984, p. 30.

- 10) This is reported in Kantor Wilayah Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Propinsi Irian Jaya, 1985, p. 9. The qualification of the teachers being from the coastal areas and from other parts of the country is not made explicit in that report.
- 11) This data was given by Mr. Fred E. Pattikawa, the present head of Representing Office of the Department of Education and Culture, in Laporan Hasil Rapat Kerja Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik Irian Jaya, 1986, p. 13.
- 12) cf. Larson, Shell and Wise, 1981, pp. 38 - 39.
- 13) Kantor Wilayah Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Propinsi Irian Jaya, 1985, p. 9.
- 14) See Laporan Hasil Rapat Kerja Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik, Irian Jaya, 1986, p. 15.
- 15) See Data Perkembangan Sekolah YPPK Irian Jaya dari tahun 1984 sampai dengan tahun 1987 p. 2.
- 16) See Laporan Hasil Rapat Kerja Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik, Irian Jaya 1986, p. 16.
- 17) This concern has been voiced by the Catholic Bishop of Jayapura in relation to his proposal to the government in which he states that all forms of government assistance in the field of education to Irian Jaya be applied not on the basis of what is done in other provinces. As an example, he proposes that Irian Jaya be exempted from Government Regulation No. 28, 1981. Laporan Hasil Rapat Kerja Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik, Irian Jaya 1986, p. 75.
- 18) See Laporan Hasil Rapat Kerja Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik, Irian Jaya 1986, p. 19 - 20. Here they give in detail the reasons why there is no clear understanding of government policies and their applications on the field.
- 19) cf. Duijnsteet, 1972, p. 23. It would be interesting to find out what sociopolitical effects have been experienced by these two groups.
- 20) cf. Laporan Hasil Rapat Kerja Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik, Irian Jaya, 1986, p. 19.
- 21) Verbal communication with the Head of the Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik Irian Jaya.
- 22) See Greiwe, 1973, p. 92.
- 23) cf. Duijnsteet, 1972, p. 25 and Ajamiseba, 1985, p. 7.

- 24) See Larson, 1981, p. 16.
- 25) cf. Ibid, p. 21.
- 26) cf. Larson, Shell and Wise, 1981, p. 40
- 27) cf. Ibid, p. 38
- 28) cf. Larson, 1981, p. 31.
- 29) cf. Ibid
- 30) cf. Larson, Shell and Wise, Op.cit., p. 40
- 31) Thanks to the work of some Missionary organizations such as CAMA, UFM and RBMU and also that of UNCEN-SIL Cooperation program.
- 32) Verbal communication with Mr. Poana, the former head Dinas Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, who used to work in the Paniai area during the Dutch rule and experienced the time when Ekagi was used as a medium of instruction.
- 33) cf. Larson, op.cit., p. 30.

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**LITERASI DANI:  
PENJELAJAHAN DALAM BIDANG SOCIOLINGUISTIK LITERASI**

**Ikhtisar**

Minat adalah suatu faktor penting di mana orang menerima program pendidikan pada umumnya, dan khususnya dalam bidang literasi, yang berhubungan dengan kesadaran akan kegunaannya untuk pribadi atau masyarakat. Makalah ini menjelaskan perkembangan literasi suku Dani dan membicarakan hak fungsi serta nilai literasi dalam hubungannya dengan penerimaan literasi bahasa daerah.

Berminatnya ratusan orang Dani pada literasi, terjadi bersamaan dengan berpalingnya mereka kepada Allah dan Alkitab. Minat untuk menerima, baik berita Kristen maupun literasi didasarkan atas keinginan untuk menegakkan kembali keabadian yang diceritakan oleh dongeng-dongeng mereka. Bahan-bahan primer dan bacaan telah dibuat oleh para misionari, tetapi tanggung jawab mengajar ada pada penduduk asli. Literasi mencapai puncaknya pada tahun 60-an ketika 50% orang dapat membaca pada bermacam-macam tingkat. Pada masa ini diperkirakan 25-40% orang Dani telah melek huruf. Meskipun kebanyakan orang Dani belajar membaca dalam bahasa daerah, sekarang telah ada sekolah untuk anak-anak dan kelas non-formal untuk orang dewasa dalam bahasa nasional.

Karena fungsi pertamanya berhubungan dengan firman Allah, maka bahan-bahan tertulis untuk orang Dani menjadi satu sumber kebenaran dan sebagai simbol kewibawaan. Kewibawaan ini telah meresap ke dalam fungsi literasi di samping meluas ke bidang-bidang lain. Sebagai contoh, bentuk lamaran untuk menikah dan transaksi perdagangan yang tertulis lebih berwibawa daripada dalam bentuk lisan. Tulisan telah digunakan untuk mengurus tanggung jawab dalam kebudayaan mereka, karena hubungan telah meluas, dan bentuk-bentuk lain dalam berhubungan terbatas. Menulis mempunyai sebuah fungsi yang penting dalam melatih pemimpin-pemimpin gereja orang Dani dan misionari baik dalam komunikasi maupun dalam laporan di antara misionari-misionari ini dan gereja yang mengutus. Namun demikian, literasi dalam bahasa nasional berfungsi kebanyakan dalam bidang pendidikan dan pemerintahan.

Literasi untuk orang Dani berkembang dan bertumbuh karena ada bidang-bidang dalam masyarakat Dani di mana literasi berguna, dan literasi memang berfungsi sesuai dengan nilai-nilai tradisional.

Karena nilai-nilai sosial membentuk dasar dari minat untuk menerima literasi, maka suatu sociolinguistik literasi menyeluruh harus melampaui analisa fungsi literasi dalam suatu masyarakat (di mana banyak penyelidikan terhenti) kepada suatu pengertian dari nilai-nilai yang mendasari fungsi-fungsi tersebut. Suatu penerapan kepada sociolinguistik literasi semacam itu akan menolong pendidik dalam menyesuaikan program-program mereka untuk memenuhi kebutuhan masyarakat di mana mereka mencoba untuk mengembangkan literasi.

**DANI LITERACY:  
EXPLORATIONS IN THE SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF LITERACY**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Educators have long recognized the important influence of motivation on learning. Motivation is a crucial factor in the acceptance of educational programs in general, and specifically of literacy, and is tied to its perceived usefulness for the individual or community (W. Walker, 1969). Those who grow up in Western societies acquire motivation for literacy from the modeling by parents and peers, and later from the reality that literacy is essential for economic survival and coping with the demands of our society. However many minority-language communities around the world who live outside the mainstream of national societies have minimal motivation for literacy. These communities, characterized by subsistence economies and traditional values and patterns of behavior, often see little use for literacy. Educators who seek to promote literacy in these types of communities must find some way to interest people in the usefulness of reading and writing (Gudschinsky, 1973).

In this paper, I will describe the development of Dani literacy as a springboard for discussing the functions and values of literacy in relation to the acceptance of vernacular literacy (VL). I will conclude with comments on how this discussion fits into a developing model of the sociolinguistics of literacy.

Spolsky and Irvine suggest two criteria under which VL literacy is most likely to be accepted: 1) "when there already exists a domain or domains in which literacy is perceived as being useful by members of the vernacular-speaking community," and 2) "in domains or for communicative functions that are perceived as congruent with the traditional social and cultural pattern of a group." (p. 75-76) The first criterion has to do with functions of literacy, the second with societal values. These two notions are crucial to the understanding of the dynamics of the VL literacy acceptance.

Before going further, we should consider what literacy is. It encompasses much more than the skills of reading and writing. I will use the term, as Street does (1984, p. 1) "as a shorthand for the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing."

He adds that "what the particular practices and concepts of reading and writing are for a given society depends upon the context ... They are already embedded in an ideology and cannot be isolated or treated as 'neutral' or merely 'technical'." In other words, any discussion of literacy must deal with the question of "literacy for what purpose?" An adequate definition of literacy must include the notions of societal functions and values (Ferguson, 1979; Fishman, 1980; Heath, 1980; Stubbs, 1980). Spolsky (1982, P. 142) concurs by urging that we "study literacy as a social phenomenon, looking at the role played by the written language in the functioning of a community."

Some have erroneously thought of literacy as a 'single homogeneous' technology that is to be acquired by all societies for the same functions and with the same values attached to it. Street (1984) labels this the 'autonomous' model of literacy. In contrast, he urges us to consider the concept of 'literacies', rather than a single, autonomous 'literacy'. He proposed an 'ideological' model of literacy, in which "the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which it is embedded; the processes whereby reading and writing are learnt are what construct the meaning of it for particular practitioners." (p. 8).

Pattison (1982) also rejects the notion of an 'autonomous' literacy. "The technologies of literacy have some general characteristics that apply in all cultures, but generally it is useless to discuss reading and writing as abstract forces. They can only be understood as part of the society that uses them ... Not every society has chosen to use literacy in the same way." (viii).

The ways in which the Dani people of Irian Jaya have chosen to use literacy will illustrate a few of the functions that literacy can have in a society and form the basis for further discussion of the sociolinguistics of literacy.

## DANI LITERACY

### The Social Setting When Literacy Was Introduced

How literacy came to be adopted into the culture of the Western Dani<sup>1</sup> of Irian Jaya, Indonesia, is an interesting story that sheds light on the question of why some minority language groups are more eager than others to accept literacy in the vernacular. Until the 1950's, the Dani still lived in the Stone Age. Their first sustained contact with the outside world came in 1954, with the arrival of Christian missionaries. Within a dozen years, not only was there a mass movement to accept the Christian faith, but also to accept literacy in the VL.

At the time literacy was introduced to the Dani, warfare was the chief occupation of the tribesmen. Attack and reprisal

touched the lives of everyone in the community. Their weapons and tools were made of stone, bone, wood and natural fibers. Metal and paper were unknown to the Dani. Their language, of course, had never been written. They lived in the isolated mountain valleys of western New Guinea island, with little awareness that the rest of the world existed.

When the missionaries arrived, they found the Dani very receptive to them and their message. (Missionaries from five inter-denominational missions -- The Christian and Missionary Alliance (CAMA), Unevangelized Fields Mission (UFM), Australian Baptist Missions Society (ABMS), the Asian and Pacific Christian Mission (APCM) and Regions Beyond Missionary Union (RBMU), worked cooperatively in the Dani area beginning in the 1950's.) The missionaries set about learning to speak the Dani language and to devise an alphabet so that the people would be able to learn to read the Bible and understand the Christian message. As the missionaries became more proficient in Dani, they listened with great interest to the stories people told around the fires at night. One myth spoke of the snake who could shed his skin and thus enjoy *nabalan kabelan* -- eternal life. One of their ancestors had known the secret of *nabalan kabelan*, but he had disappeared into a hole in the earth. The myth then said this ancestor would come back some day to share with the people the secret of *nabalan kabelan*.

The Dani discussed whether or not one of the missionaries could indeed be this ancestor. The missionaries presented the message of the Bible as the secret of *nabalan kabelan* and the people responded in what has been labeled a 'messianic movement' (James Yost, a missionary in Irian Jaya with RBMU, personal conversation). Beginning in 1958, there were mass movements among the Dani aimed at cutting themselves off from their traditional way of dealing with the spirit world. Thousands would gather at one time and burn their fetishes to renounce their dependence on evil spirits and to indicate their desire to follow the God of the Bible.

### How Literacy Spread

Along with this mass movement toward the God of the Bible, there was a parallel movement toward literacy. Nearly all the Dani wanted to learn to read the Bible that the missionaries were translating into their language. Motivation for the acceptance of both the Christian message and literacy was based on a desire to regain the immortality their myths told of. As Douglas Hayward, veteran missionary with UFM (1984), put it, "...our books fitted into the same functional slot as their mythology, and what they had lost, we apparently had. They wanted access to that information, and so they wanted to read."

The first literacy classes were conducted as part of a formal program of education aimed at adults. Since literacy was viewed by the missionaries as a means of spreading the Gospel,

they chose to train the existing leaders (i.e. adult men). Eventually, literacy spread to women and children as well. Missionaries in different valleys developed literacy materials and methods which they shared with one another. So there was a cooperative, if not strictly coordinated, program of literacy among the five missions that worked in the different valleys of the Western Dani.

In the village of Karubaga, beginning in 1960, Regions Beyond Missionary Union (RBMU) set up a school in which one couple from each of thirty-nine Dani groups lived for over a year. Besides learning more about their newly-found faith, they began learning to read Dani. This school disbanded after 18 months and a primary school for children was opened in 1961, which taught basic education subjects in Dani and Dutch. In 1963, the adult literacy program judged most effective by the missionaries began with 100 men and women as students. Some were able to finish the course within two months and went on to teach others. Before long all the teaching was done by the Dani themselves.

Beginning in the early 1960's, missionary John Dekker of RBMU wove the teaching of the Gospel together with literacy at Kanggime (a village in the valley adjacent to Karubaga). All who wanted to hear the message of eternal life would gather to listen to the missionary explain it each afternoon. Around their fires, discussions of the new message went on into the night. Previously, young men and women were excluded from hearing sacred secrets. The shaman had a monopoly on magic and secret knowledge. Now the way was open for all to hear talk that fitted into these same functional slots. The missionaries stressed that the message they proclaimed was God's message, not their own. On the weekends, those who had listened to the message during the week scattered to their own villages, up and down the valley, to share God's talk with their family and friends. Literacy spread in the same way.

In the village of Mulia, missionaries with UFM began preparing primers and teaching the leading men how to read in 1961. The natural leaders were not always the best learners, however, so they would often bring a younger relative to take their place in literacy training. UFM's approach was informal from the outset and developed into an 'each-one-teach-one' type of program. Those who learned to read in the beginning of the program went back to their home villages and started informal classes for their family and friends. Fifteen hundred people out of a population of about 20,000 learned to read in this manner at one time in UFM areas alone. In 1984, nearly every one of the 75 churches in the Ilu/Mulia (UFM) area had its own literacy class, each taught by a Dani, who had most likely learned from another Dani. The missionaries themselves taught comparatively few people to read.

Motivation to read the Bible was very high in the sixties and fueled the drive for literacy in the VL. Literacy was perceived as an essential stepping stone in the path to God that the Dani were eager to follow. The ability to read gave a person status and opened the way to positions of leadership in the growing church. Reading also filled some of the spare time that resulted when the once ever-present warfare was discontinued.<sup>2</sup> At the height of the movement, an estimated 60,000 Dani (about 50% of the population) had acquired literacy to some degree (Scovill, 1984).

While the teaching of reading soon became indigenous, the production of literature continues to depend on the missionaries. Having enough literature to whet new readers' appetites has been a challenge. Besides a series of eleven primers, a half-dozen readers were published which helped prepare new literates to read the Bible. Stories from the Old Testament were available early in the program, and single books of the New Testament were distributed as they were translated. The complete New Testament was distributed in 1982. (The first edition of 17,000 copies sold out quickly and 14,000 more were ordered). Other aids to Bible study, such as a concordance, commentaries and Bible lessons are becoming available in Western Dani, as well as booklets on healthy living. A news sheet was published early in the literacy movement, but was later discontinued.

The missions recently revised their literacy materials, but a need remains to produce more literature to keep new readers motivated and improving their reading skills. Helping the Dani become writers, editors and publishers will be necessary to insure that a good supply of indigenous literature is available as the functions of Dani literacy expand (Wendell, 1982). Unfortunately, there was a period several years ago when no new literature was available. This resulted in many who had learned to read during the peak of the literacy movement losing that ability. Later estimates of literacy have varied between 25% (Bromley, 1977) and 40% (Scovill, 1984).

#### National Language Literacy

Missions had invested eight years in VL work among the Dani when the Indonesian administration of Irian Jaya began in 1963. Only a few Dani could speak the national language (NL), Bahasa Indonesia, at that time. The missions, however, sensed the importance of encouraging the spread of the NL and implemented the government's policy of the NL as the medium of instruction for formal education.

Primary schools began to be established in the UFM area around 1965, but only in the mid-80's have they become available to the majority of Dani children. Parents desire to send their children to school, but a shortage of teachers has limited enrollment quotas considerably. With approval from the Department of Education, UFM has offered a program of literacy in

the VL to children (about age six) before they start government schools. This program has successfully helped children make the bridge to NL instruction -- so successfully, in fact, that some teachers require students to complete a VL literacy course before they can enter the first grade in the NL-medium school.

Secondary education has been made available to the Dani in both the VL and the NL. Besides several VL-medium Bible schools to train church leaders, an NL-medium school in the provincial capital now offers both Biblical and manual training. A theological seminary using the NL as medium of instruction is planned as well.

It is estimated that fewer than 10% of all adult Dani can speak the NL at even a basic level. Fewer can read it. Nevertheless, though most adults have very little contact with speakers of the NL, there is a felt need for learning both to speak and read Bahasa Indonesia. To meet this need, David Scovill of UFM prepared a four-volume text for helping adults learn the NL. There have also sprung up, in the area around the village of Ilu, Indonesian courses in each church, of the 'each-one-teach-one' variety. "One of their own people who has learned to read and speak the language now teaches (without salary) the adults in his village. The level of instruction varies considerably ..., but these programs are helping people move into the national culture" (Hayward, 1984).

About twenty-five years have elapsed since literacy was first introduced to the Dani. It is remarkable that up to 40% of the population have learned to read in that period of time and more than one in ten have their own copy of the New Testament. There are ongoing VL literacy classes in most Western Dani villages and a continuing desire for more literature (e.g. the Old Testament, etc.) in the VL. Literacy in the VL has become an indigenous institution and a part of the Dani way of life.

In the seventies and into the eighties, a concern for education in general and integration into the Indonesian nation has been growing among the Dani. However, even though interest in VL literacy no longer has the fervor it had at the peak of the movement in the sixties, there is still high interest. In the beginning, it was the adults who were most highly motivated to learn to read. Now it is the young people, who have grown up with Bahasa Indonesia as the medium of instruction in school, who have the highest interest in VL literacy. The first literacy programs only taught reading in order to keep things simple. Later courses included writing, and today this has become very important to the Dani for personal letters, marriage arrangements and business agreements.

#### Functions and Values of Literacy for the Dani

Dani literacy began in the VL. The initial function which fueled the widespread acceptance of literacy as an innovation was

its use to gain access to highly valued information (i.e. the Bible). Thus, a form of sacred text literacy developed, with the Bible as the primary content of reading and the church as the primary social institution through which literacy was acquired.

For the Dani, the written word became a source of truth and a symbol of authority.<sup>3</sup> This source of truth they believed could give them eternal life, and they pursued the learning of it enthusiastically. During the day they listened to the message of the Bible and learned to read it for themselves. At night they discussed the message around their fires. The missionaries clearly stated that it was God's Word, the Bible, that was the source of truth, not the words of the missionaries.

In this way, written language, by its association with the Bible, took on the value of authority. The message gave value to the medium. Written language typically carries more authority than oral language in many societies, and for the Dani this was especially so. Written messages were to be believed and obeyed because they had divine authority. As the functions of literacy expanded into other domains (e.g. marriage arrangements and business agreements), the value of an authoritative written word was key in paving the way.

When courting rites were discontinued, for example, girls still initiated marriage proposals. Some girls used written proposals and came through with great authority. Early in the spread of literacy, a man came to a missionary with a note from a young woman which read, "While I was praying, the Lord impressed me that you are to be my husband." (Dekker, 101-2) The missionary asked the young man if God had spoken to him in the same way. "No, he has not ... but it is written down." The marriage did not happen, but the message came through with authority because it was written. Up to that point, the Scriptures were the only written material the Dani knew of, and they accepted them with the authority of a message from God. Written messages were binding on them. When marriage proposals began to be written, they carried parallel authority to that of Scripture. Within 20 years the writing of marriage proposals became a common function of literacy (Hayward, 1984), though they undoubtedly lost some of the authoritativeness originally associated with them.

Dani literacy has broadened its functions in the 1980's to the domain of commerce. Written documents are becoming the only authoritative way to do business and send information. (Hayward, 1984) Dani literacy has expanded partly because of the authority attached to literacy when it was first introduced. Another reason for the expansion is the change in Dani social patterns and demography. Since contact with the outside world in the 1950's, the Dani have traveled increasingly from their mountain valley to other parts of the province and nation. Writing letters has enabled them to maintain cultural commitments (e.g. marriage and trading relationships), especially when their

contacts are dispersed over a large region in which other forms of communication (e.g. telephone, radio) are extremely limited.

The growth of the Dani church brought an increased need for trained leaders. The functions of Dani literacy quickly came to include not only Bible reading but also study of theology, leadership principles, bookkeeping and other subjects useful for emerging leaders. The ability to read and write became a prerequisite for church leadership.<sup>4</sup> The Dani church began sending its own missionaries to dozens of the other 200+ minority language groups of Irian Jaya, communicating and reporting in part through writing. Teaching reading became an integral part as well in the spreading of the Gospel message to these other groups. (Dekker, 1985, 117-54)

Literacy in the NL functions primarily in the domains of education and government. For young people, NL-medium education is available in most communities. Those who wish to find employment in a government office must become reasonably fluent in both spoken and written Indonesian. NL literacy also has some use in ordering goods for sale in small village stores. The functions of NL literacy are expected to grow with the spread of the NL.

What does the future hold for VL literacy among the Dani? When literacy was first introduced, the VL was the only option. Now that a growing percentage of the Dani have the opportunity for NL-medium education, there is a choice of which language to use in the written mode for which functions. Observers close to the Dani (Scovill, 1984) note that they want the benefits the NL brings but strongly want to retain their Dani ways. Their strong ethnic identity will keep them holding fast to their language. Dani children, increasingly exposed to more and more Indonesian, are beginning to use it outside of school. Indonesian language policy encourages the use of both the NL and the VL. Therefore each can remain strong within its own domain -- the VL in the home and community, the NL in education, media and government.

In a typical diglossic situation, the High Language is used for religious purposed. As the Dani become more fluent in Indonesian, it will be interesting to study their language use in church. Since the VL was used in the church at its inception, its tradition and strength may enable it to resist the NL's takeover. Durability of VL literacy may well hinge on whether or not the Dani view Christianity as 'foreign' or as an integral part of their culture. The next decade will provide the real test, when the first generation to be fluent in the NL will have a viable choice between the VL and the NL as mediums for literacy.

## CONCLUSIONS

From this description of Dani literacy comes several observations relevant to understanding the acceptance of literacy in other communities. First, motivation clearly had a key role in the Dani's accepting literacy. Their motivation to read depended on their perception that literacy had useful functions that fit in with traditional values.

The case of Dani literacy clearly fits the criteria for VL literacy acceptance suggested by Spolsky and Irvine. The Dani perceived literacy to be useful in certain domains, and functioned congruently with traditional values. These were societal factors that predisposed the Dani to accept literacy. Other factors, of course, also contributed to the acceptance of literacy (e.g. the acceptance of the innovators, i.e. the missionaries), but it seems unlikely that the Dani would have adopted literacy without the motivation that sprang from their perception that it would meet basic societal needs.

Not only must literacy meet a community's needs on a functional basis, but it must also fit with existing values. There is a strong connection between societal values and motivation for literacy. This is a major reason why some literacy programs fail -- they claim some advantage or reward for literacy that is not valued by the community. No motivation is quite as powerful as that which taps strongly held traditional values. The Dani's messianic expectation and desire for eternal life, reflected in their traditional mythology, motivated them to accept both the missionaries' message and literacy.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast, Brandt (1981) cites cases among the Indians of the Southwest United States who rejected VL literacy because the recording of their language violated strong cultural values. The Algonquins of the North American Northeast used written symbols as mnemonic aids in the recitation of oral literature. One would imagine they would consider literacy to be useful in recording texts. However they, too, have cultural values that cause them to view literacy as a threat rather than a support to their cultural heritage (W. Walker, 1984a). Literacy for these groups 'goes against their religion'. They must act as conscientious objectors when it comes to the written mode of language.<sup>6</sup>

Another important observation drawn from the Dani study is the way the initial function of literacy affects its later use for the community. The initial function that prompted the acceptance of literacy impressed a value upon it that became a grid through which the community regarded future functions of literacy. To date, only those new functions for literacy that are congruent with the value placed on it in the beginning have become well established.

For the Dani, literacy first functioned as the way to obtain valued information. It became the 'oracle of God' to them and

thus acquired the value of authority. As literacy became useful in other functions (e.g. business agreements and marriage proposals), it continued to carry the value of authority. It will be interesting to see what functions literacy will have in the future and whether or not the value of authority will remain associated with the written language for the Dani. Another interesting study would be whether or not literacy in the NL carries the same value of authority as it does in the VL.

There is a cyclical pattern then. Traditional values influenced the acceptance of literacy at the outset. The original function imprinted future literacy with the value of authority. Thus an innovation to Dani culture was bequeathed a traditionally positive value, and this new technology became a recognized social institution -- an indigenous part of the culture.

This process parallels the way in which a 'sponsor' eases the entry of a foreigner into a new community. It is awkward for an expatriate to fit into a community in a foreign country; his inevitable cultural blunders can be misinterpreted by the local citizenry, and he may be rejected or only icily tolerated as a separate category of citizen. With a sponsor in the community, the situation can be different. The newcomer benefits from the prestige and reputation of his sponsor. He becomes credible and accepted, not strictly on his own merits, but on those of his sponsor. For the Danis, literacy was accepted on the strength of the values inherent in their mythology. Dani mythology 'sponsored' the acceptance of VL literacy. Later, as people saw other uses for literacy, it could be accepted as a useful innovation on its own merits.

VL literacy does not always have such a gracious 'sponsor' in minority-language communities. The path is not always paved so neatly by traditional attitudes and beliefs. Educators who wish to promote literacy in minority language communities must be aware of the important motivation inherent in the values of that community. They must also be creative to discover functions for literacy that will be perceived as useful by the community and consonant with community values.' The ground for Dani literacy was prepared by their myths. The missionaries appealed to the Dani's desire for eternal life and motivation was almost instantaneous. Literacy grew and flourished like corn in fertile soil. In other communities, the ground must be plowed more diligently by innovators, educators and researchers before literacy will take root and flourish.

The sociolinguistic aspect of literacy deals with the way written modes of language are developed, used and valued in a given society. It goes beyond the technology of reading and writing (e.g. orthography design, primer construction, etc.) to examine the dynamics of how literacy is adopted by a speech community for specific functions and certain domains. Since societal values form the basis of motivation to accept literacy,

a thoroughgoing study of the sociolinguistics of literacy must go beyond an analysis of the functions of literacy in a society (where many studies stop) to an understanding of the values that underlie those functions. An application of such a study will aid educators in tailoring their programs to meet the needs of the communities where they seek to promote literacy.



## NOTES

1. The Dani are the largest group of indigenous people in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya (the western part of New Guinea, once known as Dutch New Guinea).
2. This was true also for the Fijians, who accepted the Gospel and literacy together in a 'messianic movement'. "Education ... provided an alternative and highly fascinating activity, the effect of which would be to withdraw energies from more bloodthirsty traditional pursuits." (Clammer, 1976, 72)
3. That written language carries greater authority than oral language is a widespread, though not universal, phenomenon among the peoples of the world. Whether this is a result of common social processes or something inherently authoritative about the written mode has not been rigorously established. For whatever reason, it is a fact for many societies (especially the dominant cultures of the West). For medieval Europeans, the written mode came to be valued as more authoritative than spoken language because it carried 'surety of obligation'. "Written record furthers social order by fixing obligation beyond the uncertainty of speech and memory." (Pattison, 1982, p. 97) For the Dani, the written word drew its authority from the first written literature they encountered, the Bible. Why other societies, which have traditionally operated only in the oral mode, come to value the written mode as authoritative, would be an interesting topic for further study. The role that 'religions of the book' (e.g. Islam, Christianity, Judaism) play in this process is, no doubt, an important one.
4. This may be interpreted as a result of the Christian faith being tied to a sacred text or be seen as an importation of the missionaries' Western culture.
5. Other striking examples of cultural values which open a people to literacy and Gospel come from Burma (Richardson, p. 73-105). Several of the mountain tribes (Karen, Kachin, Lahu and others) had myths concerning a lost book which told them about the Creator of the world. These myths went on to say that one day the sacred book would be returned to them by a light-skinned man, and the book would lead them to a true knowledge of the Creator. In one community, there was a book, left by a traveler, that was venerated as sacred, even though no one could read it. When the first Western missionaries contacted these mountain tribes, they were amazed at their receptivity, not knowing of these myths, which embodied long held values.
6. It is quite common for minority language groups to want to record their oral literature, both on tape and in print. Several American Indian groups of the Northwest are currently cooperating in a program to publish traditional texts which

have been translated into English for use in schools as readers that will motivate the students and affirm their cultural heritage. The fact that there are several different languages represented in this project requires that English be used. It is not known what their attitudes and values are regarding the writing of these texts in the VL.

7. See Scribner and Cole (1981) for examples of a number of different functions that literacy has fulfilled in an African society. They have documented the uses which the Vai have for literacy in the three languages in their repertoire. Shirley Heath (1980) insightfully details the functions that literacy fulfills in different American communities.

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PROGRAM PEMBERANTASAN BUTA AKSARA UNTUK  
BAHASA-BAHASA DAERAH DI IRIAN JAYA:  
PERSPEKTIF ETNOGRAFIK

Ikhtisar

Sejak bulan Januari sampai Juni tahun 1987, saya telah mempelajari sekitar 40 program Pemberantasan Buta Aksara untuk bahasa-bahasa daerah di Irian Jaya, Indonesia, dimana program ini diadakan dalam 32 bahasa yang berlain dengan penuturnya sejumlah kira-kira 525.000 orang. Studi ini diadakan dengan menggunakan suatu kombinasi/gabungan pengiriman pos (di kirim kepada pekerja-pekerja pemberantasan buta Askara), tanya-jawab (melalui radio dan orang-orang yang berkunjung ke Abepura atau Sentani) dan langsung mengunjungi lokasi untuk meneliti sekolah, mengadakan tanya-jawab dengan murid-murid, mengumpulkan contoh-contoh teks dan mendiskusikan masalah pendidikan dengan pemimpin program.

Irian Jaya, dengan jumlah bahasa daerahnya yang hampir mencapai 300 buah dengan masalahnya yang masih kritis tentang akulturasi, adalah suatu lokasi yang strategis untuk meneliti bermacam-macam program yang dirancang untuk memperkenalkan huruf-huruf (literasi) kepada orang-orang yang sampai saat ini belum memiliki bahasa tertulis. Kebudayaan-kebudayaan daerah telah menjadi pokok dari kebanyakan studi, kebanyakan dalam bidang anthropologi budaya.

Penelitian terdahulu yang berpusat pada masalah-masalah pendidikan dan linguistik telah menjadi suatu penelitian yang penting bagi program-program rutin (yang terus-menerus). Tahun 1977, Bromley meninjau lagi peranan dari Misi dan Gereja di dalam usaha-usahanya. Sekarang ini penelitian secara jangka panjang yaitu pengulangan untuk 10 tahun lagi, tetapi menekankan kedudukan sekarang dari program pemberantasan buta aksara, dengan mengusulkan beberapa perspektif untuk pengertian yang lebih baik terhadap potensi dan keterbatasan mereka.

Selama perjalanan, saya mengadakan tanya-jawab dengan orang yang terlibat dalam program pemberantasan buta aksara (lihat lampiran untuk keseluruhan daftar) dan beberapa pokok utama bermunculan. Anggapan pokok-pokok ini adalah suatu pendahuluan yang berguna untuk program pemberantasan buta aksara di Irian Jaya.

VERNACULAR LITERACY PROGRAMS IN IRIAN JAYA:  
ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES

Larry Lake  
Messiah College

INTRODUCTION

From January to June 1987, I studied over 40 vernacular literacy programs in Irian Jaya, Indonesia, programs that are being conducted in 32 different languages, spoken by a total of 525,000 people. The study was conducted using a combination of mailed surveys (sent to literacy workers), interviews (on radio and when people visited Abepura or Sentani), and direct visits to locations, to observe classes, interview students, collect sample texts, and discuss education problems with program leaders.

The ethnographic study of education has been more frequently used by scholars in the United States and Great Britain in the past fifteen years. This approach analyses the social aspects of education, not primarily the personal or psychological aspects. Studying education in this way, a researcher tries to see classes and curricula in a social context. Such a researcher uses the skills of the anthropologist, including participant observation, analysis of local environment, and close attention to details of interaction between people, to reveal the distinctive features of the educational process in that culture. An important emphasis is on understanding the place education has in a society, of what uses literacy is in the local context (Smith 1983 and Meggitt 1968). Interpretation of the educational setting is an integral part of the process, and retains priority; data-gathering does not deteriorate into mere detail-hunting (Erickson 1986).

Irian Jaya, with its nearly 300 languages and its still-critical problems of acculturation, is a strategic location within which to observe a variety of programs designed to introduce literacy to people who until recently had no written language. Cultures within the province have been the subjects of numerous studies, mostly in cultural anthropology. The previous work focusing on educational and linguistic problems has been a useful survey of ongoing programs. Bromley (1977) has reviewed the role of missions and churches in such endeavors. This current survey extends that review another ten years, but emphasizes the current state of literacy programs, offering some perspectives for better understanding their limitations and potential.

Walker (1987) and Ajamiseba (1987) also examine Irian Jaya literacy. Walker studies the Western Dani language group from a sociolinguistic perspective, and Ajamiseba elucidates the potential advantages of using vernacular education as a bridge to the national education system.

As I travelled and interviewed people involved in literacy programs, (see appendix for full list), several principal themes emerged. Considering these themes is a useful introduction to literacy programs in Irian Jaya.

#### VERNACULAR PROGRAMS OFTEN INTERACT WITH INDONESIAN SCHOOLS

At times, local Sekolah Dasar's and Sekolah Menengah Pertama's (schools in the Indonesian educational system) have a close relationship to vernacular literacy classes. In Sabron, a vernacular literacy program is repeated every few years, and is heavily attended by students of local schools. In Karubaga, cooperative financial arrangements exist for the joint teaching of national and vernacular literacy. And in remote locations like Silimo, Holuwon, Sumo, and Kosarek, literacy programs are viewed as preparing the people to handle the later expansion of government schooling. Fau'i has a continuing program of an informal school conducted in the vernacular, Iau, outside of regular school hours. This Iau school started around 1973, before an Indonesian school was introduced, and made early contributions to local literacy. It continues, and is well-attended by students successful in the Sekolah Dasar.

Infrastructure exists for more pervasive use of vernacular languages in the national school system. The 1978 curriculum of the Department of Education and Culture, the current guidelines for schools in Indonesia, allows for use of the vernacular language (Bahasa Daerah) for two years of schooling. Such a program exists in schools in Java, and apparently in some areas of Sumatra, (Dimara, 1987), but is said to be unused as yet in Irian Jaya because of a shortage of teachers qualified to use the vernacular. As more SIL and mission personnel become familiar with these government guidelines, more programs could incorporate this government allowance for the vernacular. Indeed, Ajamiseba's article (1987) advocated routine use of the vernacular in the earliest years of schooling.

#### LITERACY PROGRAMS ARE OFTEN RUN BY INDONESIAN CITIZENS

Observers of the foreign missionary often worry about how little education and literacy work might be accomplished if the expatriates were to leave. Soesilo, the Director of Public Health in Irian Jaya since 1980, observed that expatriates

contribute major energies and expertise to programs in medicine in Irian Jaya. (personal conversation, 28 June 1987). However, significant leadership tasks are being increasingly performed by Indonesians, and in most areas, leadership development among local people is a major effort of the expatriates. Since 1982, Danis have had charge of the literacy program in Kanggime, and in Omban the program is designed to utilize a local supervisor in each district, overseen by a central supervisor, also a local person. For years, testing of students completing the first 3 primers in Beoga has been accomplished by Damals. Local interest in literacy at Kosarek led to the start up of a program several years before outsiders would have planned it. Although expatriates wrote and published the first primer (essentially an alphabet book) native speakers had an influence. And for a year, while the expatriates are on furlough, local people will disseminate the one hundred copies of materials and supervise instruction.

#### LOCAL LITERATURE IS A GOAL OF LITERACY PROGRAMS

Beyond the primer level, programs in many areas of Irian Jaya are promoting local stories, cultural activities, history, and sometime even mythology as content for readers. Angguruk is one place where the collection of local stories is seen as the source of reading materials. Publication of already-collected materials may occur soon, and will probably follow patterns of the Yali culture's division of texts into the three major categories identified by Zöllner (1977), as *suwet* (fairy tale), *wal tibagane* (origin stories), and *tindil ane* (histories, war stories, and genealogies). Since the Yali New Testament is in press, and the latest active literacy program in that dialect of Yali seems to have ended in 1972 (with possibly 200 readers), Zöllner and others advocate a new thrust for literacy, using the traditional Yali texts, to preserve some elements of the culture, and to ensure natural motivation for reading.

In the Ninia dialect of Yali, the program at Holuwon has incorporated traditional and culture stories into a primer series based on the Gudschinsky method of reaching reading, using local speakers to generate stories which are then transcribed and reviewed by others. An advanced reading book is in preparation. All materials in this book are composed by local speakers, unlike the previous method, still in use in some areas, where the missionary composes controlled-vocabulary stories, then perhaps checks these with local speakers for accuracy.

Even hymnody can be affected by local textual traditions. A recent review of the hymnal at Holuwon resulted in the addition of numerous locally written hymns (and their corresponding tunes) and the removal of all of the expatriate authored ones, some of which had been set to music from Papua New Guinea.

Among the Asmat new attempts are being made to revitalize literacy efforts, until now overshadowed by national education programs conducted in Indonesian. From the Bible school at Ayam, teams will periodically travel to their home villages to teach literacy courses. Texts, revised from older ones dating from 1957, will incorporate recently collected traditional stories. This literacy picture is similar to the Angguruk Yali program in that a completed NT has preceded a return to a sustained literacy effort.

Even Bible translation is affected by local textual traditions. For example, Zöllner found strong occurrence of parallelism in Yali myth, and, as translation of Psalms and Isaiah continues, is attempting to incorporate Yali poetic patterns in his translation. Bromley's New Testament in Dani will incorporate Dani song traditions when appropriate, using a chanted refrain between verses of the hymns of Revelation.

In many cultures in Irian Jaya, widespread use of traditional texts must be pursued with caution, since guardianship of texts is prevalent. Under these conditions, many stories can be told to a limited audience, perhaps only initiated males, or can be told only by designated "guardians" of each story. In the Mairasi language group, Lloyd and Nancy Peckham have observed that the telling of a myth must be arranged with the guardian, sometimes months in advance. Even then, the myth can be told only to a certain limited audience. Obviously, such a text cannot be freely printed in a primer for the use of all who can read. Guardianship in several forms occurs in numerous groups in Irian Jaya, and can present a formidable obstacle to literacy programs.

#### TEACHING METHODS ARE OFTEN ADJUSTED TO LOCAL CONDITIONS

Irian Jaya's semi-nomadic cultures have some particular problems in the acceptance of educational systems as typically conceived by Westerners. Most lowland cultures in Irian Jaya can be considered semi-nomadic: fixed location agriculture was not traditionally practiced, groups tend to be small and frequently mobile, moving between "home" and a hunting camp, or just making jungle forays from a "base". These hunter-gatherers might settle in a given area due to government pressures or the proximity to mission help, medical care and food supply, but have not yet begun practicing agriculture on any regular basis. Further hindering such developments are kinship systems such as those of the Dou, at Korodesi, as reported by Ivor Green, where the matrilineal system means that males are usually on at least three distinct lands in a lifetime.

These semi-nomadic groups undertake periodic trips by hunting parties into the jungle, where food is gathered and then brought to the village or to a hunting camp where most of the villagers may be temporarily assembled. At those times, the home

village is often left populated by "the halt, the lame, and the blind." For the most part, government-induced resettlement into central area compounds the time-in-the-jungle problems: people retain their hunting rights to traditional lands which are now further than ever from "home". The Asmat hunting, fishing, and foraging areas, for example, are traditionally tributaries to the major rivers, and are now more remote from the settlements than before relocation. And the Isirawa, now moved nearer the north coast, hunt and garden on their ancestral lands, which are "very far inland" according to Molly Hewitt. The move to the coast has added more fishing to their activities, but seems not to have hampered the traditional ties to the Kwerba, manifested by marriage and trading relations, and by linguistic similarities, including old myths told by the Isirawa in the Kwerba language.

Although some mountain groups, because of local ecology, are semi-nomadic for the most part, most of my comments will concern those lowland groups for which I have direct information, the speakers of Sikari-Tai, Berik, Isirawa, Kwerba, Momuna, Asmat, Dou and Iau. How educators have handled the typical conditions of schooling in semi-nomadic cultures may provide clues to further developments needed as literacy education continues in these areas.

Literacy in Sikari-Tai has been marked by slow progress. David Martin of RBMU notes that members of the culture tend to have very short attention to a given task, not surprising where success is measured in finding food, getting it, and moving on to the next meal. "For them," Martin says, "two or three days with others is enough." One solution he is exploring is development of units that are only two or three days long, with a three or four day break between them. In Fau, Janet Bateman's work with the Iau speakers will be planned to accommodate the village/hunting cycles. Class would meet for one week, then be dismissed for a week of food-gathering. At another time, she will help them plan ahead by urging the planting of gardens just before a three week session of classes.

Even the time of day in which classes are held can be fit more closely to local "schedules". Literacy classes in Mokmeifeda, where recently-migrated Meyah speakers have classes near a transmigration camp, are held early morning or late afternoon, to allow for garden work during the rest of the day. Theresa Rhoads has found that this schedule especially allows women to study at a more productive time of day. Most educators in Irian Jaya agree that early morning classes are preferable to ones held later in the day. Les Henson's classes in Sumo, in the Momuna language group, are held early morning, with a review time in late afternoon. Besides, these literacy classes are held in two-week cycles, alternating with Bible school curriculum. Dave and Joyce Briley oversee Bauzi language programs in Noiade and Danau Bira, and find a three day class, four day break pattern works well.

Recently David Martin has begun planning to base the Sikari-Tai literacy program on individualized instruction, and has broken a pilot class of eight into two groups meeting two days a week, on alternate days. The classes are not taught as a group, but each individual is tutored. One drawback, of course, is the heavy workload for the instructor in this system. Yet, traditional education in this group, and in most others, is conducted on a one-to-one basis. A man teaching a boy about making and using arrows, for example, does not gather all the eligible males together for an hour's illustrated lecture about the uses of arrows, (and by then all the birds would be gone from the jungle for miles around), but instruction is pursued in context, when needed, between the two individuals. Impractical as this model might seem for larger scale education, it is important to note that most semi-nomadic groups are fairly small.

Sue Westrum, in a program among the Berik speakers at Somanente, has attempted to combat the problem of "disorganization", lack of school schedule, and absence of a tradition of class-oriented education, by developing a very detailed instruction manual in which potential teachers are drilled in, and which prescribes precisely every move and almost every word in class. Modifications of this approach include the one-page lesson plans of the DeVries at Aurime, in the Kwerba language, and the Sims' development of 5 types of lessons with a model lesson plan for each, in the Ketengban language.

Kinship patterns in semi-nomadic cultures may also present challenges to educational programs. Strong clan ties may fragment what outsiders intend as a general educational program: teachers from one clan may give preference to students of that clan, just as health workers near Sikari charge members of other clans for medical care but treat their own clan members for free. This pattern has carried to the church, with an important adaptation: elders are chosen so that each clan is represented by an elder. Martin proposes that teachers be similarly selected so that each clan has at least one literacy teacher, a person who would be responsible to his own clan for developing readers and writers.

Such a jurisdictional model, though not carried to the clan level, is used in the Asmat literacy program as developed at Ayam by Cal Roessler. Each church will have a teacher to help promote literacy in that local group, and those teachers will also be trained to collect local texts for use in readers.

#### LITERACY PROGRAMS ARE VITAL TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The need for reading and writing is most dramatically seen in areas where medical and agricultural programs are being pursued. At Mulia, medical texts are being rewritten in outline form; in Somanente, a health manual has been a popular text, and

in Holuwon, a book on raising rabbits has been a powerful incentive for learning to read.

As such programs continue, the interrelationship between literacy and other community development elements becomes clearer to both initiators and recipients of these programs.

#### TEACHING OF WRITING IS INCREASING IN LITERACY PROGRAMS

Reading has traditionally received first place in literacy programs, but many educators are now experimenting with introducing the writing of stories, autobiographies and other student-oriented material in the earliest lessons. In Sumo, students produce stories in class by dictating sentences to the teacher, who writes them on the board, and then has students read the developing story. The text can later be saved for publication in a reader. Such integrated use of writing in education is part of a trend toward using writing as a tool for learning, not just a way of testing. Recently, educational practice in Britain and the United States has been marked by increased attention to the explicit teaching of writing. (Murry 1985 and Glatthorn 1981) Such an emphasis seems well-suited to Irian Jaya programs, as literature is often a product of literacy classes, not a phenomenon occurring outside of them. In some other countries, published literature already exists; literacy students aspire to read it, but in most language groups in Irian Jaya, most of the extant written literature is that produced in classes or by people closely associated with the program.

Local writing is pursued outside of literacy classes in only a few areas of Irian Jaya. A writers workshop, on the model espoused by SIL in other countries (Wendell 1982) was last held in 1980. In Karubaga, a Dani writer, Menis, began work as a writer in June 1986. His current projects include transcription and editing of taped interviews of 5 church leaders who discussed their recollections of old myths and of the coming of the missionaries. All of his material is being prepared in Western Dani, with an Indonesian precis accompanying it. He is under the supervision of the local church leadership. Some of his material will be published for use in the local literacy program, which is marked by a dearth of transitional material from primers to the New Testament. Very few other areas in Irian are pursuing such a Christian Writers program, yet many leaders express interest in developing such projects in the future.

#### SUMMARY

In summary, literacy programs in Irian Jaya possess a variety of features. Some, started thirty or more years ago, are largely in the hands of capable local leaders, while others of similar vintage, have long ago succumbed to inertia, or have been purposely cancelled in favor of more "pressing" issues such as

evangelism. Other programs, more recently developed, are still in formative stages. The more vigorous of these are marked by intentional study of local culture, and of the nature and place of traditional forms of literature and education, and by collaboration with local leaders and teachers to develop educational systems which, while possibly very different from Western models, reflect indigenous conditions and resources.

# APPENDIX: Literacy Programs Studied, January - June 1987

Number	Language (33)	Speakers	Location(43)	Contact
111	Mairasi	2500	Lobo	Peckham
201	Sikari-tai	800	Sikari	Martin
209	Bauzi	1000	Danau Bira	Briley
210	Berik	1000	Somanente	Westrum
223	Isirawa	2000	Amsira	Hewitt
233	Kemtuk	2500	Sabron	Werner
235	Kwerba	1500	Aurime	DeVries
250	Orya	1600	Guay	Fields
302.1	Dani LGV	100000	Tangma	Bromley
302.2	Dani MG		Tulem	Maxey
303.1	Western Dani	129000	Karubaga	Winch
303.2	Western Dani		Mamit	Winch
303.3	Western Dani		Kanggime	Winch, Dale
303.4	Western Dani		Tiom	Goodlet
303.5	Western Dani		Pit River	Goodlet
303.6	Western Dani		Mulia	Powell
303.7	Western Dani		Kelila	Williams
303.8	Western Dani		Ilaga	Larson
303.9	Western Dani		Bokondini	Williams
304	Eipomek	3000	Eipomek	Doriot
307	Yale (Kosarek)	800	Kosarek	Steinbring
308	Ketengban	7000	Omban	Sims
309.1	Kimyal	4000	Korapun	Young
309.2	Sela	3000	Korapun	Kline
311	Momuna	1200	Sumo	Henson
312	Nduga	10000	Mapnduma	Owen
316	Silimo/S.Ngalik	5000	Silimo	Maxey
321.1	Yali, Angguruk	15000	Angguruk	Zöllner
321.2	Yali, Ninia	9500	Holuwon	Wilson
401	Kebar	5000	Kebar	Kalmbacher
405	Hatam	12000	Minyambou	Griffiths
409	Manikion	12000	Anggi	Moers
412.1	Meyah	10000	Testega	Rhoads
412.2	Meyah		Mokmeifeda	Rhoads
503.1	Asmat (Jaosakor)	2000	Jaosakor	Preston
503.2	Asmat (Central)	40000	Ayam	Roessler
528	Sawi	2500	Comoro	Yost, Mills
602	Damal	14000	Beoga	Gibbons
604	Dou	709	Koradesi	Green
606	Ekari	100000	Enarotali	Doble
611	Moni	20000	Hitadipa	Owen
616	Iau	800	Fau	Bateman
618	Wodani	3000	Bugalaga	Burkhardt
921	Yawa	6000	Rosbori	Jones

Language numbers from: INDEX OF IRIAN JAYA LANGUAGE. IRIAN Vol 12, 1984. Updated from field interviews and reference to 2nd edition of INDEX, in press.



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## SIKAP DAN PERAWATAN KESEHATAN DIANTARA SUKU SENTANI

### Ikhtisar

Semua referensi untuk orang Sentani yang ditulis akhir-akhir ini adalah bersifat linguistik; terbitan terakhir yang bersifat antropologi ditulis oleh Wurm (1932). Makalah ini menguraikan, baik hubungan timbal balik di antara kesehatan praktis dan agama masa kini, maupun masa lampau, dan usaha untuk menjernihkan sikap di dalam memilih pengobatan tradisional dan pengobatan barat.

## HEALTH CARE OPTIONS AND ATTITUDES AMONG THE SENTANI<sup>1</sup>

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UNCEN-SIL

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Pre-Contact Health Practices and Attitudes
- 3.0 Current Health Practices and Attitudes
- 4.0 Current Health Problems
- 5.0 Barriers to Acceptance of Western Health Practices
- 6.0 Summary

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Sentani are one of approximately 200 different negroid language groups living in Irian Jaya, Indonesia, and one of the 900 known to exist on the island of New Guinea. There are thought to be currently 26,000 Sentani speakers, divided into three dialects: East, Central and West. The dialects are so named because of their geographical location on Lake Sentani, the traditional home of the Sentani people. Data for this study were collected from all three dialects and from a related (60% cognate) language, Tabla. This language family is part of the widely spread Trans-New Guinea Phylum (Voorhoeve, 1969; Wurm, 1982; Gregerson and Hartzler, 1985, p. 35), and is non-Austronesian.

All references to the Sentani language of recent origin are linguistic in nature. The last published anthropological source was Wirz (1932). This paper deals with both present and past interrelationships between health practices and religion, and attempts to clarify current attitudes toward traditional and western health options.

The Sentani are agriculturalists and fishermen. Their diet, especially from adolescence into adulthood, is potentially good as they grow a variety of fruits and vegetables, and fish is readily available as a protein source. Apart from fish, their staples are sago (a starch obtained from straining the pith of the sago palm trunk) and sweet potatoes; those who can afford to buy rice in the towns will do so. Pigs are raised, but eaten only on ceremonial occasions; wild pigs are hunted for food.

Most adults appear strong and vigorous, although death before middle age is not unusual.

The Sentani build their houses on stilts over the waters offshore from the islands and edge of the lake. In 1900 these houses took the shape of long clan houses; these days clan houses have disappeared in favor of nuclear or extended family dwellings. Traditional building materials come from the sago palm, bark for the floor, leaf stems for the walls, and fronds for the roof. Since 1945, however, U.S. Army surplus metal left by MacArthur and his troops has been popular. The U.S. troops are reputed to have introduced clothing also to the Sentani prior to World War Two both men and women wore either an abbreviated bark cloth apron or nothing at all. Feelings toward Americans and westerners in general are very positive. Sentani land, along with all of Irian Jaya, is now under the protection of Indonesia, which accorded provincial status to this territory in 1964.

The Sentani way of life is now in transition, as much of their land is being purchased by non-Sentani people, and considerable capital development is being undertaken there both by individuals and by the Indonesian Government. This has brought into sharp focus the fact that the Sentani economy has traditionally been cashless; as land is sold, difficulties in the areas of cash use and investment are being experienced.

## 2.0 PRE-CONTACT HEALTH PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES

The Sentani people have had contact with people of different languages and cultures for at least 300 years. Most of this culture exchange was sporadic, however, and it was not until the Dutch Government set up a post in their area in 1925 that continuous contact with a more technologically advanced society was established. Prior to that time the Sentani people held uniform views as to the nature of the universe and the nature of sickness.

In this world view, the universe was divided into two parts. The first was the physical world that is seen, called *wali yo* (literally, 'life place'). The second was the world of supernatural beings, called *helea yo-kunuwai yo* (literally, 'everlasting and happy place'). The first was occupied by humans, animals, trees and earth. The second was the domain of two sets of spirits, the *mahe* and the *walobo*. The *mahe* are the ancestor spirits, and the *walobo* are spirits of the land, sea and air who have always been, even before the existence of the Sentani himself. These spirits governed Sentani in the change from noon to night, from dry season to wet, and in the laws of morality and tradition. Any breaking of these laws, any offense against these spirits, resulted in catastrophe. These

catastrophes included epidemics in the village as a whole and individual illnesses, depending on what kind of offense was committed. Because the consequences of committing an offense were great, it was important for the Sentani to establish communication with these spirits so that they could find out how to please them. These ideas, in varying form, are common not only in New Guinea, but in other societies -- such as the American Indian (Rogers and Evernham, 1983: 103-116) -- around the world. The whole community had to cooperate in keeping the 'natural order,' which meant maintaining life and prosperity and averting disaster.

Unlike some groups around the world who had a special set of people whose function it was to communicate with spirits, every adult male Sentani was obliged to assume a relationship with at least one *walobo*. He then became the *walobo*'s medium, and was able to use the expertise of his spirit. Like the Ningerum of Papua New Guinea (Welch, 1983:39), the Sentani used his knowledge to improve his gardens, make him successful on the pig hunt, to control the weather, and to promote, or divert, catastrophes. The relationship usually began during initiation ceremonies, when the *walobo* would come upon a man and identify himself. The village chief, called the *ondofolo*, himself a representative of the chief spirits, usually had a relationship with several *walobo* and often functioned in the role of village high priest. These relationships were usually passed on from father to oldest son, so that this particular son had little choice in the spirit role he had to play in life. If one family or clan lacked a certain spiritual expertise (pig hunting, for example), they could call upon a neighboring group to supply them with a medium. It was understood, however, that this action incurred obligation, and some kind of payment would have to be made.

No women, according to both Wirz and Puraro, had spiritual experiences. They were not allowed into the spirit house, and could not see the fetishes. Their sole function in the initiation ritual was the supplying of food. Today, however, spirituality is a recognized part of the female experience, as I note in Section 3.

In the course of time, some men proved themselves more adept at spirit lore than others. These men became known as *meyo puyo*. The *meyo puyo* was a worker of white magic who, with his mysterious knowledge, could control the spirits who brought sickness, death and misfortune. He did not cast evil spells on people. The black magic experts became known as *pulolo felalo*, literally, 'warrior,' and it was their function to create trouble for the village's enemies. In using the term 'warrior' for this person the Sentani indicates what he thinks is the most effective form of warfare -- spell wars. The *pulolo felalo* was not a healer, but he had the power to stop epidemics, as did the *meyo puyo*. In this area their powers were similar.

While the *pulolo felalo* would normally bring sickness to enemy villages, each family head had the power to call up their ancestor spirit with the aim of bringing disaster on personal enemies. This was done with an ancestor spell, called *mahe pulo*. An ancestor could be used to help the family or to bring ruin to someone else. However, if all the proper rituals and rules were not observed, the very capricious *mahe* could just as easily bring ruin to his own family. The Sentani believed that all major events in his life, either good or bad, were caused by the spirits, either the *mahe* or the *walobo*. Both were worshipped in special ceremonies.

## 2.1 Supernatural Healing

When a Sentani became ill from a sickness believed to be caused either by a spell or by an offense against the natural order, the family of the patient held a special ceremony in their house. The *meyo puyo*, who had diagnostic powers, was called in to examine the sick person, and it was he who would decide the cause of the sickness. If he decided that an offense against the spirits had occurred, the *meyo puyo* would hold the patient's foot, and from the condition of the vein(s) predict whose sin caused the sickness. The offender(s) would then confess, and food or water was prepared. The healer imbued the food with his magical powers by incantation and the waving of a smoldering coconut husk, and then explained to the patient how he should eat or drink it. It was thought important for the smoke to touch the part of the body causing the pain. The *meyo puyo* wore a belt made from the bark of the *masoi* tree, as this was believed to make the incantations more effective.

With regard to this 'smoking' procedure, it is interesting to note that this practice is not unique to the Sentani. For the Gimi, Glick (1977) states that "the men blow smoke over the bait, presumably to lessen the danger of contact with something now so intimately connected with an agent of illness." However, Herrick (1983:146) observes for the Iroquois that smoke "is regarded as some sort of medium through which spiritual forces may become united with earthly substances." This latter view is more likely to be the case with the Sentani, and in fact, with the Gimi as well.

The herbs which were used in the healing ceremonies could be boiled, or simply put into cold water and blessed, after which they were given to the sick person to drink. This, along with the confessions, incantations, smoking and the brushing of the body with the leaves of the crotan bush, constituted the cure. The crotan leaf stroking was believed to cause the evil influence to concentrate at one point of the body, at which time it could be expelled with one forceful jerk. Afterwards the stroking leaves were thrown in different directions, and the shaman was

paid one bead for his services (these beads are a separate discussion; they are very old, probably Chinese in origin, and used as currency). It is not known at this time how much of this cure could be applied to the casting out of a spell.

I asked a young woman recently what would happen if the patient did not get well. She stated that all parties would consider that insufficient confessing had been done, and another round of sins-seeking would begin. If the patient finally died, it was the fault of the person who would not confess, not the healer.

As among the Gimi of Papua New Guinea (Glick, 1977), the Sentani see healing as only one aspect of their total world system. However, there are some cures which, from a western standpoint, are not religious in nature, i.e. herbal medicines. Today these medicines can be used independent of any religious activity, but whether this has always been the case is not clear.

## 2.2 Non-Supernatural Healing

Certain physical complaints were not seen by the Sentani to have been spiritually caused, and were able to be treated in a physical way. The Sentani had a wide variety of leaves with which he could cure boils, scabies, diarrhea and other minor complaints. The most popular was the *masoi* bark which the people chewed not only during religious ceremonies, but also as a cure for diarrhea and stomach complaints. Examples of these cures are:

Wounds: *Mare-mare fae*. Latin: *Coleus sp*  
Crush until fine. Mix with lime and betel nut and place on wound.

Upset stomach: *Onoi-onoi*. Latin: *Phyllanthus nururi L*  
Clean and boil until very soft. Drink the water.

Many other cures of this nature existed, which I will not enumerate here for lack of an English or Latin identification of the herbs involved.

From the related neighboring language group, Tabla (Collier, unpublished ms), are reported cures for snake bites (*L. piperomea pelluaido L*), liver poisoning, boils (*L. ypomoea per-caprae*), fever (*hibiscus*), constipation (*L. orthosiphon stamineus*), diarrhea, vomiting, coughs (*L. kalanahoe pinnata*), headaches (*L. dioscorea alata*), infected sores, eyes (*L. coleus sp*), and ears (coconut oil), sore muscles (*L. justicia gendarusa*), scabies and ulcers (coconut frond fungus). It is assumed that the Sentani were aware of these same herbal cures.

### 3.0 CURRENT MEDICAL PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES

In 1926 the Dutch Authorities in the Sentani area burned down the spirit houses. This was probably in reaction to reports of ritualistic cannibalism during initiation ceremonies in these buildings, and in the hope of destroying the forces which led to these practices. Indeed, cannibalism (if it did exist here, which is by no means certain) did die out, and the decision, in later years, to accept Christianity led to a decline in all ritualistic customs and ceremonies. There were those, however, who kept alive the traditional beliefs. The *meyo puyo* and the *pulolo felalo* still exist for those who want them and know where to find them. As the church is somewhat syncretistic on this issue, some of the *meyo puyo* are church elders. The Sentani people say that the last spell war (black magic) took place in 1965, but (they say) so many people died that the people became afraid and renounced the use of this kind of magic on such a wide scale. The fear of spells still exists, however, and the shamans, who are both young and old, are well known in the current society. It is widely accepted that when a person is cursed by a *pulolo felalo*, his urine turns to blood (or a blood color), and he dies the next day.

The knowledge of the healing value of certain herbs and leaves has also been kept alive. This knowledge was probably never the exclusive property of the shamans, and many Sentani today still have a generalized herbal knowledge.

Western medicine, introduced under the Dutch Administration, has been vigorously advocated by the current Indonesian Government, who have established clinics in the towns and trained health workers, some of them Sentani, to work in the villages and outlying rural areas.

In validation of the suspicion that there had always been a dichotomy between spiritually-induced and physically-caused sicknesses, is the current thought pattern of the Sentani, who think of disease as belonging to 'classes.' In one class, for instance, called *mahu*, are such symptoms as diarrhea, sore eyes, headaches, coughs and runny noses. These are all, to the Sentani, caused by pollinating flowers; thus these are mere physical ills. In another class, however, known as *hokom* sicknesses, are various childhood problems: diarrhea, lack of strength, weak legs, limpness, straight red hair, crying and vomiting and 'shortness of breath.' These are all caused by the breaking of a taboo against sexual intercourse during the two years or so that a child is still nursing at his mother's breast, and it is only the *meyo puyo* who can rectify the offense and cure the child. In this respect, then, there are times when a Sentani would feel it appropriate to visit a clinic, and times when he would feel better seeking a shaman. In reality, however, the diagnosis is often retrospective. Has the diarrhea, listed under

both classes above, been caused by a physical or by a spiritual agent? Without proof of spiritual cause, the Sentani tries first the clinic; if that doesn't work, the assumption is that the illness is spirit-caused. In this he differs from the western health worker, who is inclined to treat all physical complaints as deriving from physical causes, i.e. red hair from a protein deficiency.

In interviewing a young woman on health practices in her village, I learned that the village health workers have, in some cases, taken over the role of the *meyo puyo*. This young woman had been careful to impress upon me that no traces of the old religion remained in her village, but when I asked what happened if a woman had trouble expelling the placenta after delivery of a baby, she replied that the village health worker (*mantri*) would find out who had sinned. After the confession had been made, the placenta would exit. The importance of confession is made in the story of another young woman, well known among the Sentani for her healing abilities. This woman, so her brother reports, had a long and vivid spiritual experience some years back, and since then has been able to heal people by telling them what their sins are. They then confess and are healed. We see then that the essential feature of the old healing process, confession, has not been lost, and in some cases integrated with western biomedicine.

When dealing with western medicine, the Sentani, in concert with his approach to his own traditional healers, tends not to blame the healer for his lack of success. He rather assumes that the illness is outside the scope of western medicine, i.e. is the result of a spell. However, if the results of treatments leave the patient in worse condition than he was originally perceived to be, the healer is at fault. In two cases, children were treated for malaria by village health workers when their true problem was polio. The subsequent paralysis was seen as a direct result of the health workers' activities.

### 4.0 CURRENT HEALTH PROBLEMS

The Sentani suffer from tuberculosis, malaria, parasites, tetanus, amoeba, tropical ulcers, scabies, influenza, polio, dengue fever, diarrhea, malnutrition (among young children) and emphysema. Kidney stones, common among Javanese migrants living nearby, are not known among the Sentani. A discussion of some of these conditions reveals, at least partially, why some of these problems exist: A) Malnutrition is high among children between the ages of two and six, despite the fact that food in the area is not scarce. The people give several reasons for this: 1. Men eat first, then women; children get only what is left over; 2. It is unwise to feed young children fish because (I) they could get hurt on the bones, or (II) it makes their bowel movements smell too much. 3. Often women go off to the garden all day leaving

children at home alone. No one else assumes responsibility for feeding the children, so they don't eat from early morning till late at night. There is also the general feeling that sago is an adequate food, hence children are fed large quantities of sago to the exclusion of high proteins and vitamin foods. Among adults there is a lack of fat in the diet, which some public health officials have tried to overcome by promoting the eating of coconuts. Most adults try to avoid eating acidic fruit because the juices do not combine well with the saliva induced by betel-nut chewing. Thus they miss a good source of vitamins. (B) Parasites, amoeba and much of the diarrhea are probably caused by the Sentani custom of exuding body wastes into their lake, then drinking the lake water. Public health officials have promoted the boiling of water, but it has been my observation that this advice is being, for the most part, ignored, despite frequent protests to the contrary. (C) Emphysema is caused by the prolific smoking habits of the Sentani people. They smoke locally-grown native tobacco, and have done so for many generations. Most would not relate their smoking to sickness for the same reason that western people give, i.e. the disease is selective and does not hit all smokers. In Indonesia generally the relationship between smoking and cancer is not well known, and not advertised by doctors because few people live long enough to be seriously afflicted by their smoking habits. (D) Tropical ulcers become a problem for people whose nutritional intake is too low in the protein area. Thus diet affects how well the average Sentani can shake off this affliction without proper medication. (E) Malaria and dengue fever are both mosquito-born, and are epidemic in the area. Malaria is possibly the greatest killer, especially when assisted by the poor nutritional status of children. Some have been known to die within four hours of the onset of a (sometimes unrecognized) attack. (F) Tuberculosis is also widespread. As this disease can be spread by airborne bacteria, secretions from open lesions, or contact with excretions from infected individuals and aggravated by a poor diet, the Sentani lifestyle places its members at risk. (G) Scabies, caused by the human itch mite, occurs in populations living with poor hygiene in crowded conditions. This skin condition is usually noted only in village children, although adults also can be afflicted. The average Sentani household usually includes around ten people. Again we see the consequences of low sanitation standards.

In all of these diseases, then, we see that poor childhood nutrition and generally low hygienic standards are either the cause of, or contributors to, the problems experienced.

The Sentani themselves say that the largest number of deaths come from 'short breath' (*no fofa*), and the next from 'big stomach' sickness. In this latter case, the person loses the ability to have bowel movements and then dies. Although this may be an advanced case of parasites, the local clinic is not

perceived to be helpful for either of these two sicknesses, and the general (Sentani) consensus is that both are caused by spells.

## 5.0 BARRIERS TO ACCEPTANCE OF WESTERN HEALTH PRACTICES

The three most significant reasons why Sentanis fail to wholeheartedly accept western medical ideas are (1) culture, (2) cost, and (3) comfort. Sentani cultural ideas about the cause of sickness have been outlined above. Obviously, if they are not convinced that an illness is being physically caused, they will not relate nutrition and hygiene to the avoidance of their problems. Additionally, an inorganic cause leads many Sentani people to abandon curative medical practices when they appear to fail. It does not, however, hinder the Sentani from seeking biomedical answers to their diseases, which they do in large numbers. Second, the cost of obtaining a physical cure can be high. Operating within a largely cashless economy, the Sentani find it difficult to afford clinic fees (small though they are), the cost of medicines (quite high), or even minor items such as soap or clean water containers. When money is available, the Sentani may not spend it on health care or food, because of the wide variety of more attractive consumer items available in the stores. The technology of a tape recorder has more appeal than the utility of a mosquito net. Under the heading 'comfort' I list the problems of long waiting lines at clinics, absence of medical officers from their village posts, and a certain distrust for these health workers who, for various reasons including insufficient educational background to handle the problems involved, are perceived to be ineffective. It may also be that a non-Sentani health worker would not understand the attitude with which a Sentani approaches his health care needs, and would therefore be regarded as insensitive.

In summary, then, it is not only the culture of the people but the culture of the health-care givers, plus the bombardment of new technology, which is creating barriers to full integration of biomedicine into the Sentani lifestyle. We see, however, when viewing the health problems of the Sentani, that the major area of nonacceptance is not in curative, but in preventative, medicine.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The Indonesian Government is currently working hard to provide western (biomedical) health services throughout Indonesia. In the Sentani area they have set up clinics and trained health workers, including Sentani men and women, so that some kind of western medicine is available to most Sentani people. They have also, through the elementary school system, attempted to educate the people in cleanliness and about

mosquitoes and flies. In one village a well providing clean water has been dug. Efforts by the government to move the Sentani people off the lake onto the land, however, may be counterproductive. While living on the lake, the Sentani are not attacked by mosquitoes, as are people living on the mainland. Apparently any mosquito larva in the lake is quickly eaten by fish, making the waters and islands mosquito-free. On the other hand, a move to the mainland could lessen pollution in the lake, but whether the outback would be sufficient to render the lake water safe to drink or offset the likelihood of increased malarial problems, is a question worth studying. In any case, it seems safe to assume that as Sentani children in school today -- assuming they attend for an extended period of time -- grow up, the group's attitude toward preventive medicine may change.

The current Sentani attitude toward sickness can be quickly summarized: "If western medicine doesn't cure it, it must be caused by a spirit." The decision as to cause, very pragmatically, is often made after the western medical cure has failed. It is then that the patient will consult a village healer, or, if he is a Christian, begin to pray. If a shaman is consulted first, it will probably be for reasons of cost, availability, and the ability of the shaman to understand the Sentani and appreciate his outlook. This indicates a willingness to use western medicine to the extent that it is convenient, and to the extent that it fits in with traditional ideas. Traditional ideas are more of a hindrance to preventive health care than they are for curative health care, which has always been a part of their customary pattern of life. In this, the Sentani do not differ from many other developing societies (Foster, 1978).

The Sentani are moving from a universe dominated by capricious spirits who need to be appeased in order to maintain health, to a more technologically advanced society in which natural (as opposed to supernatural) cures are advocated by persons outside their society on the basis of the nature of the sickness. Like the Diegueno (Rogers and Evernham, 1983:116), the Sentani do not always fit comfortably into this new environment, needing the support of a spiritual, rather than merely material, belief system.

## FOOTNOTES

1. This paper was written at East Tennessee State University, Fall Semester, 1986, at the request of medical anthropologist Dr. James Morrissey. I am indebted to Dr. Morrissey for his comments and help.

2. The author is a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and has lived and worked among the Sentani people for approximately six years.

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## PENYAKIT-PENYAKIT DAN OBAT-OBATAN TRADISIONAL SUKU TEPERA

### Ikhtisar

Persediaan obat-obatan modern memasukkan sumbangan kebudayaan lain dari pada kebudayaan Barat. Dengan kemungkinan akan ditemukannya lebih banyak hal dari kebudayaan suku Tepera, maka fakta ini telah menjadi perhatian awal untuk mempelajari obat-obatan suku Tepera.

Kelanjutan penggunaan dari pengobatan secara tradisional menunjukkan akan betapa manjuranya dan dalam penulisan ini terdaftar sejumlah obat-obatan semacam itu dengan cara penggunaannya. (Mula pertama, saya akan mendaftarkan akibat dari kecelakaan dan panyakit seperti terlihat pada orang pada masa yang lalu dan sekarang.) Pada pokok ini kami belajar banyak hal yang baik tentang sistem kepercayaan suku Tepera, masa kerja ilmu sihir dan perlawanan terhadapnya serta kegiatan yang dilakukan oleh para nenek moyang dan roh-roh.

## ILLNESS AND TRADITIONAL MEDICINES OF THE TEPERA

Ken Collier  
UNCEN-SIL

### INTRODUCTION

The pharmacopoeia of modern medicine "includes numerous contributions from other (than Western) cultures."<sup>1</sup> This fact, together with the possibility of discovering more about the Tepera<sup>2</sup> culture, initially attracted the study of Tepera medicine.

The continued (though not wide) use of traditional medicines indicates how efficacious they are, and this paper lists a number of such medicines along with their manner of use. First, I will list the causes of accident and illness, as seen by the people, both in the past in the present day. It is at this point that we learn a good deal about the Tepera belief system, the working of spells and counter spells, and the activity of the ancestors and the spirits.

### CAUSES OF ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS

The term for being sick in Tepera is *sa mekonen* 'he is sick'. Literally this term means 'blood is doing to him'. Thus blood is seen as the source of illness, but repeated questioning has failed to clarify this meaning any more.

#### Past Beliefs

In the past, *yansina* "olden days", accident and illness were classified as either natural or supernatural. Natural causes of illness included 1)infection, which caused scabies, 2)accidents resulting in minor injuries, inconsequential falls and cuts, 3)physical stress resulting in muscle soreness, hunger, thirst and heat and 4)overt human aggression. With respect to overt human aggression, the most significant examples of this were the wars between clans and villages. Present day people relate with enthusiasm how vicious were the conflicts of the past and how serious injuries were caused by arrows. Any sudden and unexpected hitting of someone however, was seen as being caused by a particular spirit called *mase*, who was seen as a causer or tempter.

Supernatural causes of illness were seen to be caused by spirit aggression or sorcery. Spirit aggression was seen as the

result of breaking certain taboos or going into dangerous areas inhabited by spirits. Spirit aggression could also be the result of a garden or fish spirit being angered by what that spirit saw as greediness on the part of a person, taking too much food from the garden or too many fish from the sea. Spirits could cause illness or insanity.

There are two major types of spirits, both of which inhabited specific local areas. First, *werang* spirits inhabited sections of the beach, to stretches as little as twenty meters. These spirits also inhabited small trees and streams, or the gardens. If a person went into the area inhabited by a *werang* and he violated a taboo there, then that spirit would cause illness in the offender or in his child. A common illness said to have been caused by an offended *werang* was fever and chills.

Second, *suansi* spirits were believed to commonly inhabit more dangerous places, such as large trees, large rocks or large crevices. These in turn were the most dangerous spirits, which could cause great heat and chills (now seen by the people as malaria) or could even cause death by destroying or extracting inner organs. Both the *werang* and the *suansi* took their names from the places they inhabited.

To counter the work of these spirits a *nimei nimei detero*, or "knowing person" could be summoned. He would question the one suffering the illness as to where he had been. If he had been to a certain area, the *nimei nimei detero* would name the spirits, and tell it or them to leave.

Serious or sudden illnesses or accidents were nearly always blamed on sorcery. The general name for magic was *buro* and sorcery was called *buro peko*, or 'bad magic.' Malaria, serious influenza, dysentery, serious grille, or even scabies, if it led to death, were all blamed on *buro peko*.

Bad falls, either from rocks into the sea or from a tree, were regarded as the result of a sorcery called *burarewai buro* or 'falling sorcery.'

Some natural disasters were seen as the result of the work of sorcery. The instance given is that in anger a sorcerer may take some water from a stream, use a magical chant and then throw the water back into the stream to cause a flood. The reasons given for such an action were that the sorcerer was wronged by someone and he would want to kill that person, or injure the person by flood.

Bad sorcery was regarded as particularly evil, and so after the third occasion a person was known to have used it, the *Ondewapi*, hereditary clan king<sup>3</sup>, would ask a number of people to kill the sorcerer, which was in due course done. The first two times a person worked sorcery, they were forgiven.

The magical spells of sorcery were usually kept in the hands of a few people who were known for their skills. A wronged person who wanted to punish his offender would ask the help of the sorcerer. The sorcerer would work the entire magic himself, usually over some article of food, exuviae, or tobacco, and then the client (the offended person) would give this tobacco to the

offender, in the hope of affecting his ill health or death. Sometimes an offended person would ask the sorcerer to teach him a particular spell and pay for this. The sorcerer was always paid, usually with stone axe heads, but he could accept a very wide range of payment, almost whatever he asked, including food, beads or a woman. Magic skills were not necessarily kept just by men, but most sorcerers are reported to have been men.

To counter bad sorcery protective sorcery was used. Each clan had their own name for it. The *Apaserai* clan had, for example, *aro buro*, *aro* being the name they use for ginger. This could be used to protect against falls, against being shot by arrows or as a defense against the illnesses of scabies and influenza. The method was to take it, then say a chant over it, calling on the name of the ancestors. The root was then eaten and finally the leaves rubbed over the body. One older *Tepera* man said "There's great strength and life in the *aro*." To illustrate the purveyance of thought on this matter, this man offered that, "...the Americans, during World War II had very strong *aro*, a type of leaf they brought with them from America." This was said to protect them against the Japanese bullets. Their method of use was reported to be to eat some of it and also rub it on the body. No mention was made of chants.

#### Present Beliefs

Present day beliefs vary widely. One man said, "we used to use chants with the various leaves used for medicine, but since the gospel has come, we don't need the chant as God has already put the strength into the leaves." Another man noted that "we use certain chants with the leaves." Present day causes of illness and accident can also be classified as natural and supernatural, but there is disagreement on whether some accidents are natural events or caused by supernatural intervention.

As in the past, natural causes of illness and accident recognized by the *Tepera* people are infection, accident, physical stress and overt human aggression.

Scabies is seen as an infection as it is the activity of worms under the surface of the skin. Malaria is also seen as an infection, but more basically is seen as a result of bad blood from the bite of the mosquito. (The name currently used for malaria is *sunghunung*, which is the word for mosquito.) Influenza and grille are also considered infections and are seen as being caused naturally.

Minor accidents are seen as circumstantial, free of any supernatural intervention or sorcery.

Physical stress as a result of great thirst, extreme heat or cold, or muscle soreness as a result of much hard work is also viewed as a naturally caused illness.

The *Tepera* no longer engage in war, but as before, some violent quarrels do cause physical injury. Nowadays many men drink heavily from time to time and this sometimes causes violent fights. (This is a development since the arrival of the Dutch as there were no traditional alcoholic drinks.) A person willfully

inflicting bodily injuries on another is seen as naturally caused. However, some actions of this kind are seen as being caused by some spirit.

Presently, some Tepera believe that some accidents and illness are caused by supernatural means. They believe that the spirits work in the same way as outlined under Past Beliefs. However, some informants say they no longer believe in any form of spirits at all and do not see sickness as resulting from their activity.

Illness ascribed to the aggressive use of magic is seen as supernatural. This may be carried out by a specialist sorcerer, by another person under the tutelage of a sorcerer, or by a person who independently knows some magical spell. However, the use of magic is now rare. On only three or four occasions have I heard people blame a sickness or disaster on *buro peko*, or "bad sorcery". One case was where, some villagers say, a man from another language group put a spell on a local girl because her parents decided not to give her in marriage to him. He used a photo, it was believed, chanted over it, then burned the photo. The result was that her 'thinking was lost', in other words, she became insane. A second occasion was of a young mother who had severe stomach pain one evening. After being taken to a nearby village, a *nimei-nimei detero* "knowing person" who holds a person's veins and 'reads' the flow of blood and thereby tells the origin of an illness, said that an individual in another village had worked sorcery.

To summarize the difference between the past and the present, we may note the following differences. There is nowadays far less activity of the sorcerer, there is less perceived activity of spirits, while more natural causes of illness are recognized. Presently there is a much wider range of beliefs amongst the Tepera than compared with 80 years ago. This point indicates change in the society through outside contact with the Dutch, the Ambonese missionaries, and more recent contacts with other Indonesians, as well as the growth in the number of schools in the Tepera villages.

#### TRADITIONAL MEDICINES

The following medicines, or herbs, are only a sample of a possible 100 to 150 herbs that have been used in the past by the Tepera people. They are grouped under headings for convenience, with some of them being listed twice when used for more than one purpose. Alternate names are given where known. These herbs are currently not in wide use.

L = Latin, I: = Indonesian, E: = English

#### Antivenin

##### 1.A mau

Purpose: Used as an antivenin for death adder snake bites and as an antivenene for the poison of the liver of the fish, *ka waku*.

Method: The root, leaves, and/or bark, are boiled in water. When the fluid is cool enough, the victim can drink it. If a person is bitten by a death adder in the bush, then he may simply take a handful of leaves and immediately eat them.

##### 2.O kepei koru koru L:*piperomea pelluaido* I:*suruh-suruhan*

Purpose: Used as an antivenin for snake and centipede bites.

Method: The leaves are crushed and mixed with coconut oil, then heated over a flame. The mixture is then rubbed on the bite.

#### Boils

##### 1.Nendiri ere

Purpose: Used as a medicine for boils and swollen legs due to injury.

Method: The bark is peeled from the tree, then the outer part of the bark is peeled off in a thin layer. The remaining bark is pounded, and then tied onto the boil. The same method is used for a swollen leg.

##### 2.Bu syai syai L:*hibiscus* I:*kembang sepatu* E:*hibiscus*

Purpose: Used to treat boils and fever.

Method: A handful of young leaves is taken and crushed with the hands in water, then the fluid may be drunk. Also the young leaves may be crushed with salt, or sugar, or coconut oil, and the mixture boiled.

##### 3.Yapare yapare L:*ypomoea per-caprae*

Purpose: Treatment of boils.

Method: The yellowing leaf is taken, pounded, then tied onto the boil with a bandage.

## Birth

### 1.0 kepei turi

Purpose: Treatment for loss of blood after birth and for general faintness

Method: A large number of leaves are taken, pounded to extract the sap, mixed with water and drunk. Material may also be soaked in this fluid and tied around the head.

## Constipation

### 1. Kumis kucing L: *orthosiphon stamineus* I: *kumis kucing*

Purpose: To treat constipation and inability to urinate.

Method: The leaves are boiled in water and when cool the tea is drunk.

## Cuts, thorns and splinters.

### 1. Pera kepei

Purpose: To treat cuts, particularly bad cuts, and for the relief of 'bad blood' by purging of the digestive tract, and for extraction of arrow heads.

Method: The leaves are broken off, then the root is crushed, then the fluid is squeezed out into a plate. Material is soaked in the fluid and tied onto the cut. In former times when arrow heads had lodged in a person's body, the fluid was squeezed directly onto the wound. This would cause the arrowhead to be forced out, perhaps by contraction of the muscles. The root can also be boiled in water, then drunk three times a day after meals.

### 2. Pera kepei

Purpose 2: To treat thorns and splinters.

Method 2: The leaf is crushed and tied onto the wound where the splinter is located.

### 3. Aupere lemon pere I: *kapur & lemon* E: lime chalk & lemon

Purpose: To stop bleeding in cuts.

Method: Approximately one third of the top of a small lemon is cut off and then spread with lime on the cut face of the lemon. This is heated over a flame and the lime-covered-face of the lemon is placed directly onto the bleeding wound.

### 4. Aupere peuna kepei L: *sellaginella* sp

Purpose: Treatment of cuts.

Method: The leaves are crushed and mixed with lime and tied onto the wound.

## Diarrhoea and vomiting

### 1. Sinsing kepei L: *jatropha curcas* I: *daun jahar*

Purpose: To treat diarrhoea.

Method: The leaves are boiled in water, placed in a cup and then three drops of kerosene are added and then the mixture is drunk.

### 2. Pera kepei

Purpose: To treat diarrhoea.

Method: The leaves are boiled in water and the fluid drunk.

### 3. Kese kese kepei L: *phyllanthus nururi* I: *meniran*

Purpose: To stop vomiting.

Method: The leaves are boiled in water and drunk as a hot drink.

### 4. Nangka silsa L: *annona muricata* I: *Nangka silsa*

Purpose: To treat diarrhoea.

Method: The leaf is heated over a flame until it softens, then mixed with crushed coal and in turn mixed with water. Then the mixture is drunk.

5. Syai ere I: *binkudung*

Purpose: To treat diarrhoea.

Method: The bark is boiled in water and when it is cool enough it is drunk.

6. Yuri kepei

Purpose: To stop severe vomiting.

Method: The leaf is boiled in a container with water, and drunk as a hot drink.

7. Syai kepei I: *binkudung*

Purpose: To treat diarrhoea

Method: The leaf is heated over a flame, coconut oil is spread on the leaf, and then tied onto the stomach.

Fever, influenza and coughing

1. Kepei bepori bepori L: *kalanahoe pinnata* I: *cocor bebek*

Purpose: To stop coughing

Method: The leaf is crushed until the fluid come to the surface, and then is mixed with hot water and drunk.

2. Bu syai syai L: *hibiscus* I: *bunga sepatu* E: *hibiscus*

Purpose: To lower high fever.

Method: The leaves are crushed and the leaf fluid mixed in water. Material is soaked in this mixture and wrapped around the head and/or body.

3. Kasirau

Purpose: To stop coughing and colds.

Method: The leaf is crushed by hand and rubbed on the neck and chest which provides a relieving aroma.

4. Cengke L: *eugenia aromatica* I: *cengke* E: *cloves*

Purpose: Relief of fever and coughing.

Method: The young leaves are boiled in water and then the vapour is inhaled.

Headache

1. Neneme I: *jalatan*

Purpose: Headache and aching muscles.

Method: The forehead or aching muscles are hit lightly with the back of the leaf.

2. Pang kepei L: *dioscorea alata* I: *ubi-ubian*

Purpose: To relieve headache.

Method: The young leaves are pounded then placed on the forehead and tied on.

3. Keyawas L: *Psidium guajava* I: *Daun jambu biji*

Purpose: Treatment of headache and vomiting.

Method: The leaf is crushed by hand and placed in a cup. Hot water is poured over it and it is left to steep for five minutes, then drunk when cool enough.

Infected sores, ears, and eyes

1. Kepei bepori bepori L: *kalanahoe pinnata* I: *cocor bebek*

Purpose: To treat infected sores.

Method: The leaf is crushed until the fluid comes out then this is placed onto the infected sore to draw the pus.

2. Meraibu I: *minyak kelapa* E: *coconut oil*

Purpose: To treat infected ear.

Method: The oil is heated on a leaf, then tested with a knuckle to see if it is unbearably hot, and if not too hot, a few drops are poured into the ear

3. Meyana kepi L: *coleus sp* I: *meyana, iler*

Purpose: To treat pink eye.

Method: The leaf is rubbed by hand till the sap comes out, then a few drops are squeezed into the eye. If the leaf is heated a little first, over a flame, then more sap can be extracted.

#### 4.A syareko kepei

Purpose: To treat swelling in the vein in the groin.

Method: The leaf is crushed and then tied onto the swelling.

#### 5.Tomai I:bintanggur

Purpose: To treat pink eye.

Method: The sap is extracted from the tree trunk, and then mixed with water. The eyes are then washed in the mixture.

#### 6.Meyana kepei L:coleus sp I:iler

Purpose: To treat sore eyes.

Method: The leaf is crushed and one to three drops of its liquid are squeezed into the eye.

#### Malaria treatment

##### 1.Yepa ere I:kayu susu

Method: a 5-7cm wide section of bark is cut off from the largest of the roots. The outer bark is shaved off this. The remaining bark is cut into small pieces and boiled in water, then left until cool enough to drink.

Another method is to make cuts in the trunk, let the sap run, catch half a cupful, then mix this with half a cup of water and drink it, morning and night.

#### Muscle soreness, swollen limbs and aches

##### 1.Peresa kepi L:justicia gendarusa I:gandarusa

Purpose: Relief of muscle soreness as a result of fall or hard work.

Method: The leaf is crushed with a rock, then tried to the affected part of the anatomy. The fluid may also be mixed with how water to drink to relieve muscle soreness.

#### 2.Syai kepi I:bingkudung

Purpose: Relief of muscle soreness as a result of a fall or hard work.

Method: The leaf is cooked in coconut cream, then placed on top of a banana leaf, then wrapped on the sore muscles. Itchiness is a sign that healing is occurring.

#### 3.Neneme I:daun gatal

Purpose: To treat aching back from malaria, influenza, or from hard work.

Method: The body is hit lightly with the back of the leaf.

#### 4.Dou kotu kotu kepei L:centella I:daun kaki kuda

Purpose: To treat sore muscles.

Method: The soil is cleaned off the roots of this small plant, then the entire plant is boiled in water to make a cupful of the resulting liquid to drink.

#### 5.DoI I:jahe E:ginger

Purpose: To treat a swollen limb after a fall.

Method: The main root is pounded and mixed with coconut oil, put on a banana leaf, heated over a flame and then tied onto the swelling as a hot poultice.

#### 6.Nendiri ere

Purpose: To treat a swollen leg.

Method: A segment of bark is peeled off a tree, then the outer layer of the bark is scraped off. The remaining bark is pounded and tied onto the swelling.

#### 7.Teru kepei

Purpose: To treat a sore back.

Method: The leaf is crushed and then mixed with coconut oil and then spread onto the back and tied with a bandage.

Scabies and skin fungus

1. Nyang kepei I: *gayang*

Purpose: To treat skin fungus. (Indonesian: kaskado)

Method: The leaf is pounded, heated over a flame and then placed on the sore parts.

2. Merai koru kepei

Purpose: To treat skin fungus.

Method: The leaf is heated over a flame and then placed on the sore parts.

3. Kundou kepei I: *ketepeng cina*

Purpose: To treat scabies.

Method: The leaf is pounded and mixed with lemon and salt. This is rubbed over the infected parts of the body three times per week.

Spider in eye

1. Bu nining kepei L: *euphorbia hirta* I: *patikan*

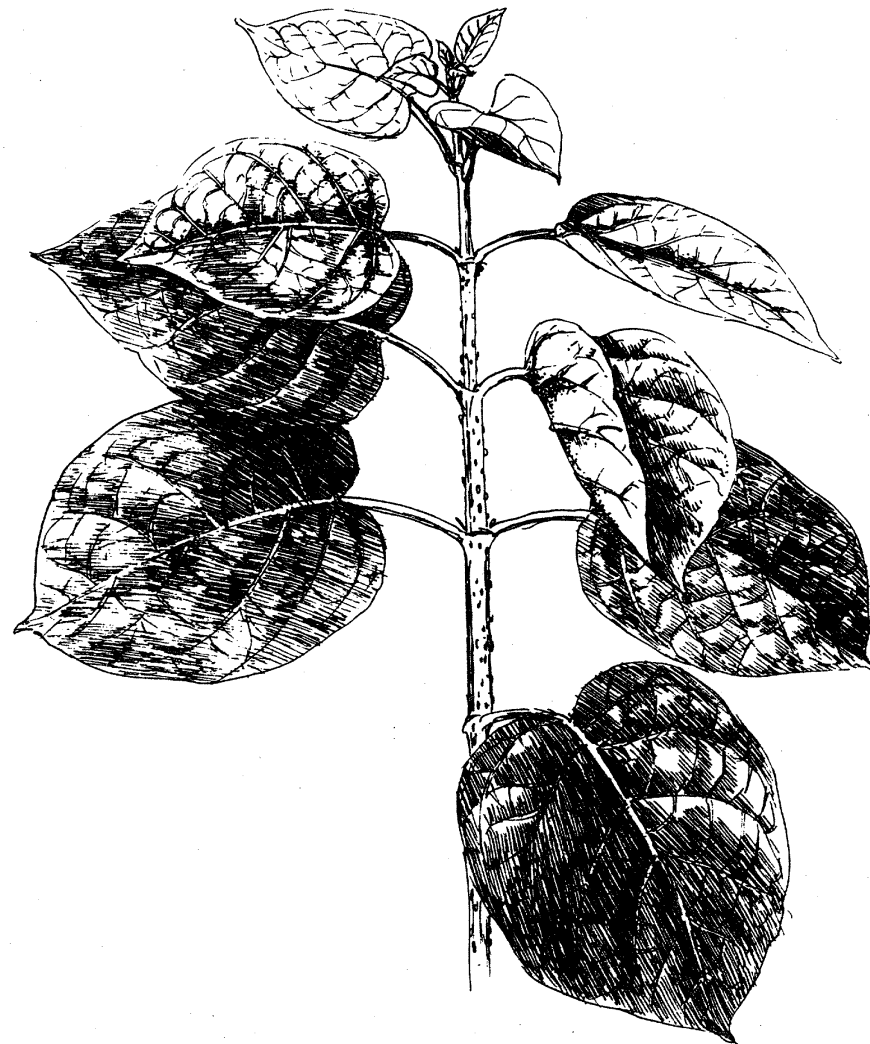
Purpose: To dissolve a tiny spider, known as bu nining, when it lodges in the eye.

Method: The small stem of the leaf is taken and snapped off. After a drop of the white sap has formed on the end of the break, this is gently pressed against the spider itself. This is done morning, midday and evening, until the spider is dissolved. It is a dangerous alkaloid.

Ulcer

1. To weka I: *jamur* E: fungus found on coconut fronds

Method: The fungus is pounded and mixed with some wet sago starch, some coconut oil, heated over a flame, and then placed on the ulcer as a hot poultice.



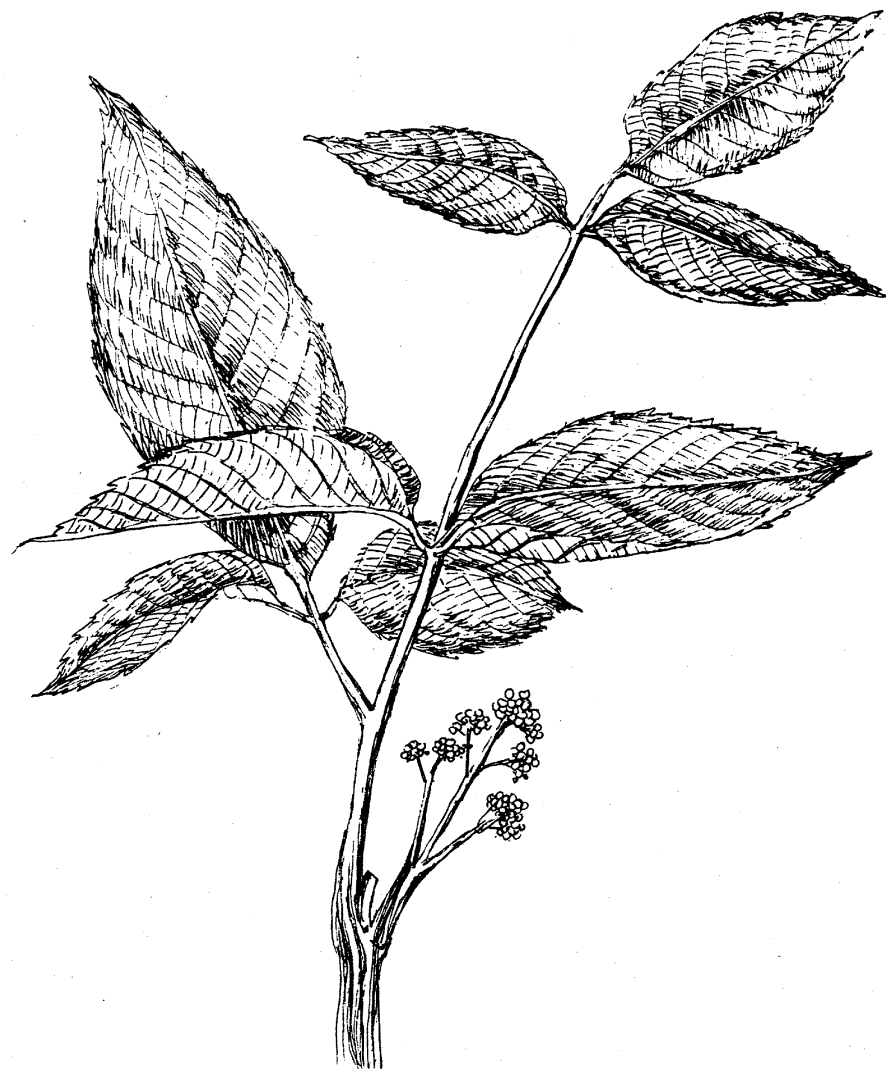
A mau



L: *Piperoma pelluaida*

O kepei koru-koru

I: suruh-suruhan



Nenderi ere





L: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* Bu syai-sayi kepei I: Kembang sepatu

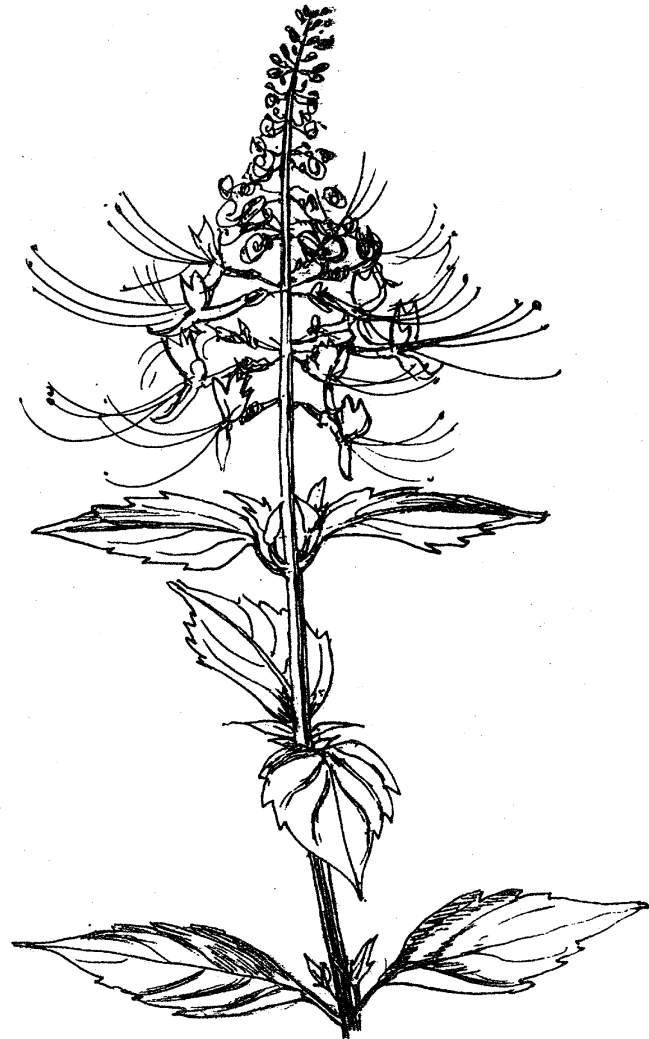




L: *Sesbania grandiflora*

O kepei turi

I: Daun turi



L: *Orthosiphon stamineus* Kumis kucing

I: Kumis kucing



Pera kepei



L: *Citrus aurantifolia*

Aupere lemon pere

I: Kapur dan lemon



L: *Sellaginella* sp

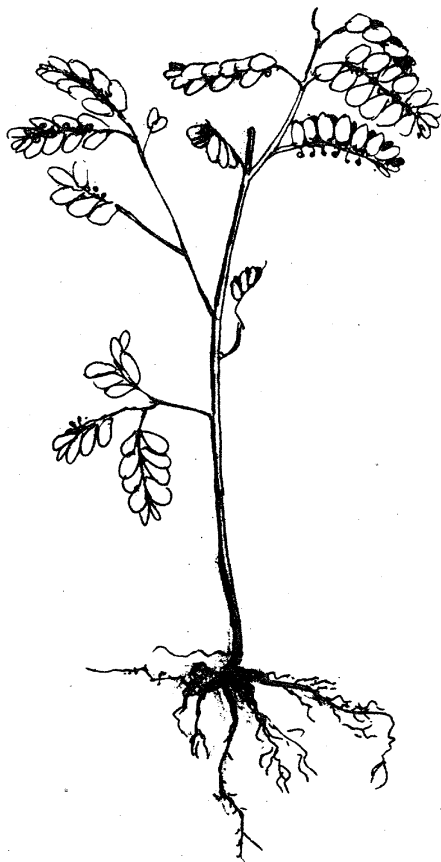
Aupere peuna kepei



L: *Jatropha curcas*

Sinsing kepei

I: Daun jarak pagar



L: *Phyllanthus nururi*

Kese-kese kepei

I: Daun meniran



L: *Annona muricata*

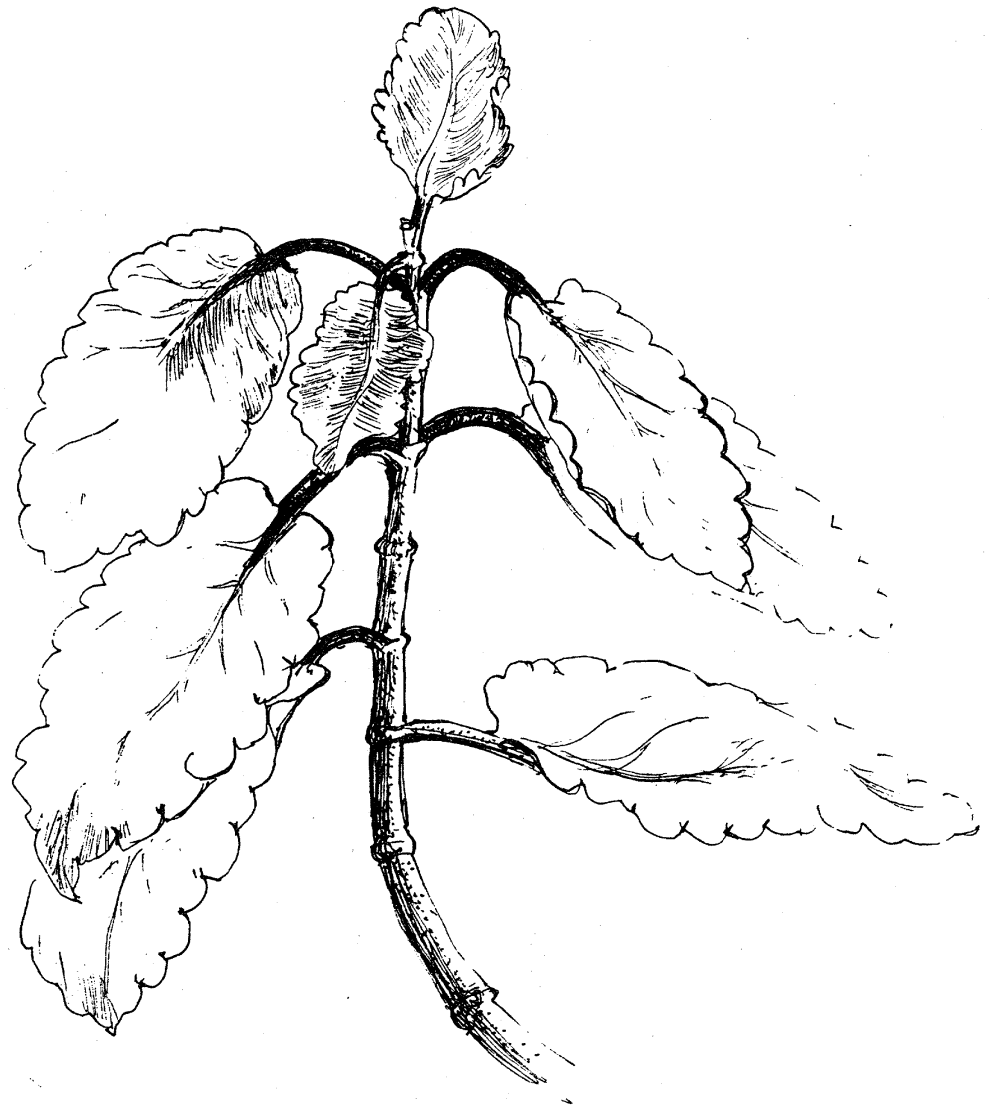
Nangka silsa

I: Nangka silsa



**Syai kepei**

I: Daun bingkudun



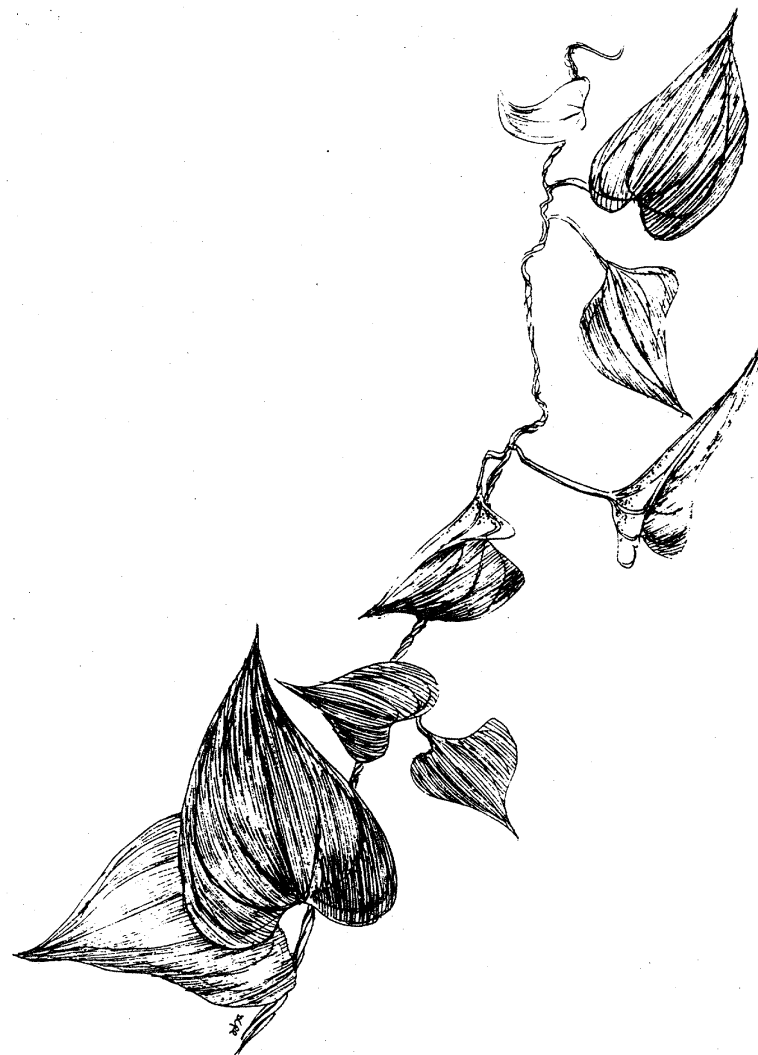
L: *Kalanchoe pinnata*

Kepei bepori-bepori

I: Cocor bebek



Kasirau



L: *Dioscorea alata*

Pang kepei

I: Daun ubi-ubian



L: *Psidium guajava*

Keyawas

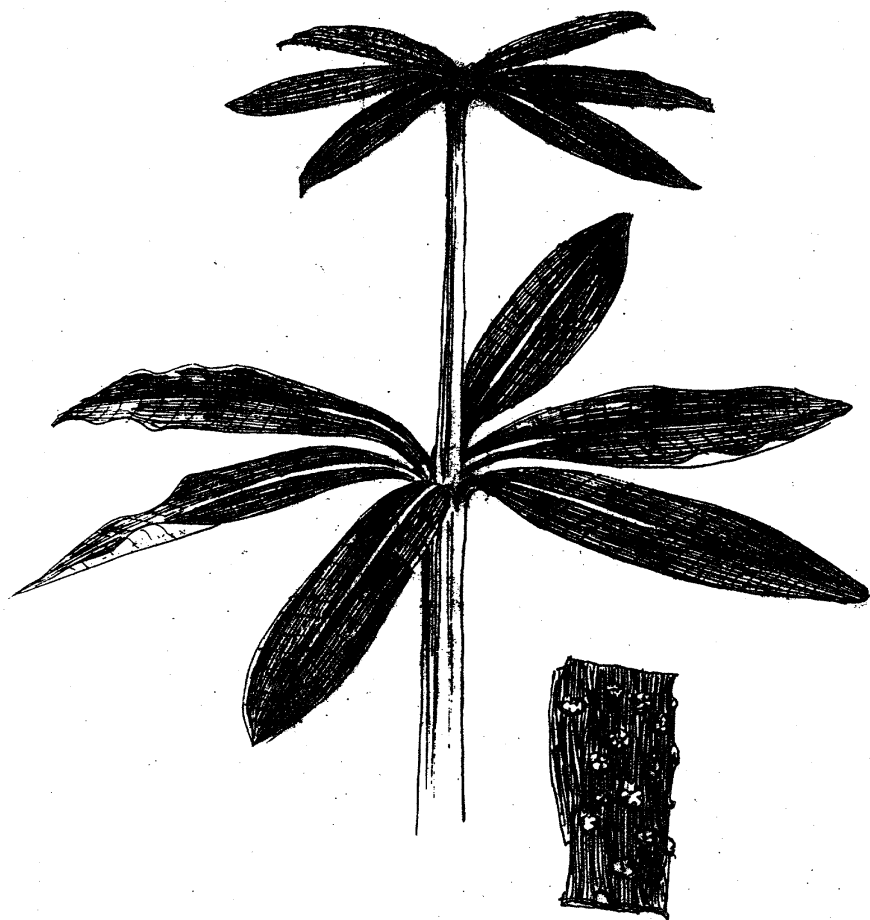
I: Daun jambu biji



Tomai

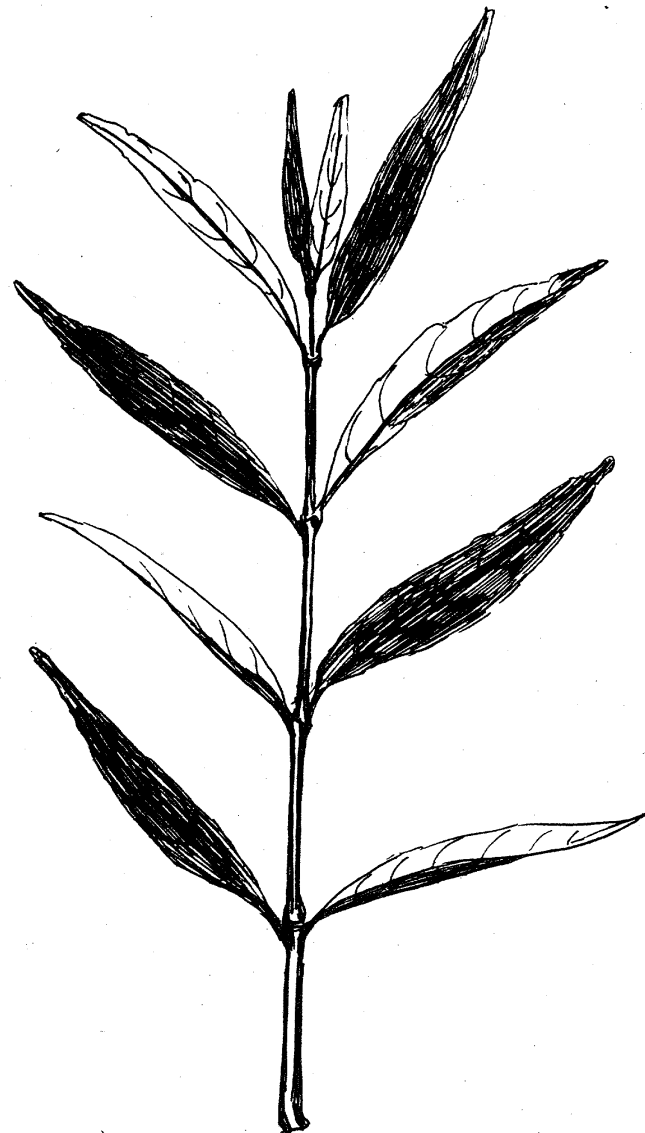
I: Bintanggur





Yepe ere

I: Kayu susu



L: *Justicia gendarusa*

Peresa kepi

I: Gandarusa



Neneme

I: Jalatan



L: *Centella asiatica*

Dou kotu-kotu kepei

I: Daun kaki kuda



**Teru kepei**



**Nyang kepei**

*I: Gayang*



**Merai koru kepei**



**L: *Cassia alata***

**Kondou kepei**

**I: *Daun ketepeng cina***



Bu nining kepei I: Jamur dari pelepah kelapa

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Murdock, G.P. Theories of Illness. Pittsburg, 1980.

2. The Tepera or Tabla people live in the thirteen villages on the north coast of Irian Jaya, starting some thirty kilometers west of Jayapura. The area extends for another thirty kilometers west. The population is approximately 3750, who, speaking a Non-Austronesian language, are gardeners and fishermen. The data for this paper were taken during stays in the village or Doromena, during the years 1978-1984. This study has been undertaken under the auspices of the Proyek Kerjasama Universitas Cenderawasih and the Summer Institute of Linguistics for the study of local languages and cultures. I am grateful to the many village friends who shared information with me.

3. The role of the 'bigmen' of the Papua New Guinea highlands has been well documented by anthropologists and they clearly do not gain power and influence by hereditary means. But hereditary kingships have not been documented, and the Tepera situation is in strict contrast to that of the Papua New Guinea highlands.

I have recorded names of hereditary kings for a number of clans going back as far as four generations. This position of power and legal authority was passed on to the eldest son of the king after his death during a large ceremony. Current practices do not include the ceremony, (but are included by the nearby Sentani people) and the king is not recognized as having as much power as he used to.

The hereditary kingship is in stark contrast to the 'big-man' of the Papua New Guinea highlands. In the introduction to A. Strathern's book, *Ongka: a self account of a New Guinea big-man*. Duckworth, 1979. The author says of the big-man, "They hold no position as of right by birth, although in practice there is a good deal of de facto succession to big-man status between fathers and sons. Instead, they must depend on the force of their arguments, their oratorical powers, and their ability to manipulate wealth". In contrast there have been Tabla hereditary kings who have been retarded, but still have the title of *Ondewapi*, indicating the strength of the hereditary right.

More detail on Tepera social structure and kinship is given in Collier, K.J. *Happiness is Giving: Aspects of Table Social Organization, in Gods, Heroes and Kinsmen: ethnographic studies from Irian Jaya*. Ajamiseba, D., Gregerson, M., and Merrifield, W., (eds.) International Museum of Cultures Publication 17. Dallas. 1983. Reprinted in IRIAN Vol. 13, 1985.

## TERMINOLOGI KEKELUARGAAN KOMBAL

### Ikhtisar

Dalam kertas kerja ini penulis menjelaskan tentang kekerabatan keluarga suku Kombai, suatu suku yang berbahasa Awyu-Ndumut yang termasuk dalam Trans-New Guinea Phylum. Penutur bahasa Kombai ada sekitar 10.000 orang yang tinggal di wilayah kecamatan Kouh, kabupaten Merauke di bagian selatan Irian Jaya. Kertas kerja ini merupakan publikasi yang pertama untuk bahasa Kombai, diskripsipun tidak tentu berlaku.

Sistim kekerabatan keluarga suku Kombai merupakan bagian dari jenis penggolongan yang sudah dikenal (bandingkan Keesing 1976): lagi pula sistem ini membuat perbedaan sama yang berada parallel in cross relatives" seperti jenis Seneca.

Persilangan dari ayah laki-laki dan ibu dari isteri ego mempunyai arti yang khusus dalam kebudayaan Kombai dan peristilahan kekeluargaan ini menggambarkan arti tersebut.

Hal-hal yang pokok dari saudara laki-laki ibu ego mempunyai hubungan dengan adat "avunculate" (bandingkan van Baal 1981) dimana arti/kedudukan dari ibu para istri terlibat dalam hubungan yang diturunkan dari ego dan pemberi pengantin perempuan.

Perbedaan antara hubungan silang dan sejajar dari paman dan gabungan silsilah sanak saudara yang diturunkan merupakan sifat yang kelihatannya adalah suatu perluasan yang khusus yang cenderung menjadi sistem kekerabatan keluarga dari kebudayaan-kebudayaan di Irian Jaya dan Papua New Guinea (bandingkan Merrifield 1983).

## KOMBAL KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Lourens de Vries  
ZGK

### INTRODUCTION

In this paper I describe the kinship terminology of Kombai, an Awyu-Ndumut language of the Upper-Digul area of South Irian Jaya, Indonesia.

I have given special attention to the ways in which Kombai kinship terms reflect the crucial cultural significance of ego's mother's brother and of ego's wife's mother.

First I give some information on the Kombai language. Then I sketch Kombai social organization. Third I mention some notions from kinship theory which we will need in this paper. After these preliminary sections I present the kinship terms in the forth section. Finally there is a section with conclusions.

This paper, which has a tentative character, owes much to inspiring studies on kinship systems of Irian Jaya to be found in Merrifield, Gregerson and Ajamiseba (eds.) 1983.

### KOMBAL LANGUAGE

Kombai (Kombay) is a member of the Awyu-Ndumut language family. This family belongs to the Trans-New Guinea Phylum of Papuan languages (cf. Voorhoeve 1975: 27; Silzer and Heikkinen 1984:72). About 10.000 persons speak Kombai. The location of the language is in the government subdistrict of Kouh in the district of Merauke of South Irian Jaya (cf. map IX of Silzer and Heikkinen (1984)).

The northern members of the Awyu-Ndumut family, with the exception of Wambon (cf. Drabbe 1959, De Vries 1985, 1986a, 1986b), are virtually unknown. The northern border of the family has not been established yet. The Kombai north of Vanggemalo still live the traditional life in tree-houses and have had no contact or very little contact with the outside world, mostly with ZGK missionaries patrolling the area. As a linguist for the ZGK I have been studying northern Awyu-Ndumut languages (Kombai,

Wambon, Korowai) since the end of 1982. The data for this study on kinship I collected during 1986.

## KOMBAI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

To understand Kombai kinship terms we will need a short sketch of Kombai social organization.

Kombai society is divided into localized patrilineal clans. These clans have traditional territories which are the corporate and inalienable possession of the clan.

The clan consists of extended patrilineal families. The clans are exogamous. Marriage is polygynous and residence is patrilocal.

The adult Kombai male has strong ties with at least the following three clans: his own clan, represented by his father (are) from whom he inherited clan-membership, his mother's original clan, represented by his mother's brother (momo) and his wife's clan, symbolized by his mother-in-law (khuni). The ties of ego to his father's people and his mother's people are of equal importance. Ego has to treat his bride-givers respectfully. This respect takes the form of a strong avoidance-relation between ego and his wife's mother. The close filial relation between ego and his mother's people is especially expressed in the institution of the avunculate, to which we will return below since this institution influences the kinship terminology.

## THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

### 1. Polysemy of kinship terms

Kombai kinship terms generally are polysemic, with a primary kintype as basic meaning and a number of additional meanings. These additional meanings are related to the primary meaning in two ways: by extension-rules and by culturally defined equivalences.

Extension-rules extend the primary range of reference of a term to include other ranges. An example of such a rule in Kombai would be the generational extension-rule. This rule is operative in very many kinship systems all over the world (cf. Keesing 1976: 267). It extends the range of reference of a term collaterally to include all other kinsmen of the same generation and the same sex (cf. Merrifield 1983a: 182). In Kombai the term are 'father' denotes the primary kintype (1):



Fig. 1. Ego calls A: are.

I follow the notational conventions of Keesing (1976)(1). Now generational extension extends are to B, C, etc. in figure 2:

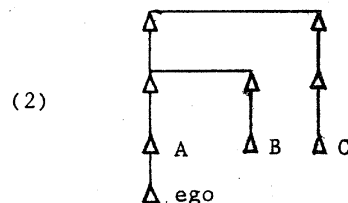


Fig. 2. Ego calls A, B, C, etc.: are 'father'.

Thus the primary meaning of are is F; via generational extension FB, FFBS, FFFBSS, etc. are brought under the scope of are.

Following Keesing (1976) we will call kinship systems with generational extension classificatory systems and the persons B, C, etc. in fig. 2 classificatory fathers of ego and classificatory brothers of A.

In addition to generational extension we find self-reciprocal extension, affinal extension and bidirectional extension in Kombai. I will use these notions as defined by Merrifield (1983a: 182-186).(2)

However, not all cases of polysemy can be neatly captured in terms of the above mentioned extension-rules. Sometimes there are additional meanings for kinship terms which are based on culturally defined equivalences (cf. Merrifield 1983a: 186). In Kombai we find a number of extensions of this type, all related to the cultural institutions of the avunculate. These avunculate-related extensions have in common that they interpret certain kintypes as belonging to an adjacent generation.

### 2. Parallel and cross

Above we noted that Kombai kinship terminology is of the classificatory type. A second important feature of the Kombai terminology is the fact that Kombai makes the Seneca distinction between cross and parallel relatives. In this paper I will use the terms cross and parallel as defined by Merrifield (1983a:178):

"PARALLEL (SENECA): Within the genealogical chain that links ego to alter, the two kinsmen of the first generation above that of the junior member of the ego-alter dyad are of the same sex.

CROSS (SENECA): Within the genealogical chain that links ego to alter, the two kinsmen of the first generation above that of the junior member of the egoalter dyad are of the opposite sex."

This Seneca type of bifurcation is a typical characteristic of the languages of Irian Jaya (cf. Merrifield 1983b:295).

## KOMBAI KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

### 1. Some general remarks

Thus far I have not found different forms for terms of address and of reference.

First person possessive prefixes are optional with the kinship terms.

There is a strong tendency to avoid personal names in addressing people; instead, kinship terms are used. This makes kinship terms very frequent items in the language. The preference for kinship terms has several causes. In the first place there are relatives who, because of the respect they deserve as members of the parent generation or of the bridegiving clan, should never be addressed with their personal names. The name of ego's wife's mother has to be avoided by ego even in reference. In the second place there is associated with each kintype a set of norms for behaviour and of rights and obligations. Now by using the kinship term the speaker defines his relation to the addressee and reminds him of the rights and obligations associated with their relationship.

A last general remark concerns order of birth. This plays an important role in Kombai kinship thinking. A number of frequently used modifiers express order of birth. *Wondo* means 'firstborn', e.g. *momo wondo* 'firstborn uncle'. *Ouvo* means 'in between' i.e. first- nor lastborn. *Landü* means 'lastborn' and is used for females only; *khaja* also means 'lastborn' but is used for males only.

The kinship terms for adoptive relationships are left out of consideration in this article.

## 2. Filial terms

### Parent generation

#### Are 'father'

Kombai distinguishes in the parent generation fathers (parallel males), mothers (parallel females), uncles (cross males) and aunts (cross females).

Are primarily denotes the male parallel parent (F). By generational extension (rule G of Merrifield (1983a:181)) are also includes ego's father's brothers and ego's father's classificatory brothers (FB, FFBS, etc.).

Affinally are is extended to include the husbands of mother's (classificatory) sisters (MZH) and of father's (classificatory) sisters (FZH). In the case of FZH however, *moro* 'paternal aunt' is always added as modifier: the term for FZH is *moropare*. Since are is applies to both FZH and MZH, the opposition between cross and parallel is neutralized in these affinal relations.

Apart from these 'regular' generational and affinal extensions, there is an interesting extension of are to MBDH. Since this concerns an avunculate-related extension we will return to MBDH in part 3 where we discuss the avunculate and its impact on Kombai kinship terms.

#### Yeni 'mother'

Yeni primarily denotes the female parallel parent (M). By generational extension the term also includes the (cl.) sisters of mother (MZ). Affinally *yeni* extends to include the wives of ego's father's (cl.) brothers (FBW) and the wives of ego's mother's (cl.) brothers (MBW), thus neutralizing the cross and parallel opposition in these affinal relations.

There are two avunculate-related extensions: ego calls his MBD and his MBSW also *yeni*. Above we mentioned already the extension of are to MBDH. All these extensions have to do with the fact that ego treats the children of MB (and their spouses) as members of the parent generation. We will return to these extensions in part 3.

#### Moro 'aunt'

Moro primarily denotes the female cross parent (FZ). By generational extension *moro* includes the classificatory sisters of father. There are no affinal extensions.

#### Momo 'uncle'

Momo primarily denotes the male cross parent (MB). By generational extension *momo* also includes the classificatory brothers of mother. There are no affinal extensions.



There is one avunculate-related extension: *momo* is also used for MBS. In 3 below we will discuss this extension.

#### Child generation

##### *Mio* 'child'

*Mio* is a sex-neutral reciprocal term to the parent terms.

The primary referent of *mio* is ego's child; generationally *mio* is extended to include the children of ego's (cl.) siblings and affinally to those persons whom ego's spouse calls *mio*. When one wants to differentiate according to sex, *mio* may be replaced by *rumu* for a male child and *khuri* for a female child. *Mio* is neutral with respect to the cross and parallel distinction and may replace the cross term *langge* 'sister's son' (cf. next section). There is an avunculate-related extension of *mio* to FZC. In part 3 below we will discuss this extension.

##### *Langge* 'sister's son'

The primary referent of *langge* is male ego's sister's son. Generationally *langge* extends to the sons of male ego's classificatory sisters. Thus this term is the reciprocal of the parent term *momo* 'mother's brother'. The term *langge* may be replaced by the term *mio* but *langge* is the unmarked choice.

There is also an avunculate-related extension of *langge* to FZS. The equivalence ZS=FZS will be discussed in part 3 below.

#### Grandparents and grandchildren generation

The terms *ama* 'parent's female parent', *ndare* 'parent's male parent' and *lono* 'child's child' form a reciprocal set.

*Ama* primarily refers to the mother of ego's parent (FM, MM).

Bidirectionally (cf. Merrifield 1983a:182, rule 1) *ama* extends to all lineal and collateral female kinsmen more than one generation ascending from ego. Affinally the term extends to all persons whom ego's spouse calls *ama*.

*Ndare* is the male variant of *ama*.

*Lono* is the sex-neutral reciprocal term to *ama* and *ndare*. Bidirectionally *lono* is extended to the grandchildren of ego's siblings and cousins, and their descendants and affinally to the spouses of all these filial *lono*.

There are avunculate-related extensions of these terms. *Ndare* is extended to PMBS and PMBDH. *Ama* is extended to PMBSW and PMBD. *Lono* is extended to (spouse's) FZCC. These extensions will be discussed in part 3.

#### Ego's generation

Both the avunculate and the distinction cross and parallel are crucially involved in the way ego classifies the relatives of his own generation.

For cross kinsmen of ego's generation ego uses either parent terms (in the case of his mother's brother's children) or child terms (in the case of his father's sister's children). Since this generational re-classification by ego is avunculate-related, it will be discussed in part 3.

For the parallel kinsmen of his generation ego uses the following three sibling terms.

*Wambü* primarily refers to ego's younger sibling. Generationally *wambü* extends to the children of ego's father's (cl.) brothers and ego's mother's (cl.) sisters inasfar as these children are younger than ego.

*Nai* primarily refers to ego's older brother. Generationally *nai* extends to the sons of ego's F (cl.)B and ego's M(cl.)Z inasfar as they are older than ego.

*Nani* primarily refers to ego's older sister. Generationally the term extends to the daughters of ego's F(cl.)B and of ego's M(cl.)Z inasfar as they are older than ego.

Then *are* or *yeni* is used for a collateral parent, his or her relative seniority to the linking lineal kinsman is usually expressed by compound kinship nouns containing the sibling terms as head and the parent terms as modifier. e.g. *arewambü* 'father's younger sibling'.

There are avunculate-related extensions of the sibling-terms to MBDC. In part 3 we will discuss these extensions.

#### 3. Avunculate-related extensions of filial terms

##### The avunculate in Kombai culture

To understand the impact of the avunculate on the Kombai kinship terminology we need a short sketch of this institution. Van Baal (1981:83) describes the avunculate as follows:

The marriage of a girl into another group establishes an alliance between the groups concerned. The factuality of this alliance is reflected in the widely spread custom known as the avunculate, the institutionalized relationship between a mother's brother and his sister's children which obliges the

uncle to act as the children's protector, helper or mentor, all as the case may be.

In a conflict-ridden society as the Kombai society a girl who is married out and goes to live with her husband, certainly forms a strong link between two patrilineal families. The girl becomes a member of her husband's clan but emotionally and socially she remains one of her family of origin. She will not forget the brother(s) with whom she grew up. Thus the often strong brother-sister dyad (cf. also van Baal 1981:83) is one of the *raison d'être* of the avunculate. For the children the brothers of their mother represent their mother's original clan.

Whatever the reasons behind the avunculate may be, it is very evidently there in Kombai life. A whole web of customs has been woven around the avunculate. In the context of this paper we can only mention some of these customs.

In all marriage transactions the MB is crucially involved. He co-finances the marriage of his ZS and receives part of the payment for his ZD; more important than this financial involvement, however, is the decisive influence of MB on the choice of partners for his ZC. A MB has to find a wife for his ZS negotiations concerning the marriage. In order to find a wife for his ZS, MB will turn first to his own *momo* for help and ask a girl from his own MB's people for his ZS. In this way ego gets his wife often and preferably from his mother's mother's people and ego's *momo* mediates in the arrangement. Once married, ego lets his wife raise a pig for his MB who helped to arrange his marriage.

MB protects his ZC when they are young but once they have grown up, it is their turn to protect their MB. The mutual protection of MB and ZS is especially relevant in the context of illness and death. Like many other Melanesian peoples, the Kombai attribute illness and death of persons, who are not babies or very old, to sorcery and witchcraft. The Kombai really have a witchcraft obsession. When one member of the MB-ZS dyad dies, the other member has the obligation to go immediately to his MB's or ZS's place and find out whether black magic was involved, and if so, to catch the witch (*khakhwarumu*), kill him and eat him.

When a boy comes of age, his MB gives him ceremonially his first penis gourd along with sexual instruction.

A man has to organize at least once in his life a sago-grub feast in honor of his MB who helped him in various ways.

The relationship MB-ZS is more important than MB-ZD. The mutual protection of MB and ZS is the aggressive Kombai society with its constant witchcraft-accusations, witchcraft-trials and witchcraft-revenge makes the MB-ZS dyad very valuable.

Like all relationships in Kombai the MB-ZC relationship is one of reciprocity. By raising a pig for MB or by organizing a sago-grub feast for MB or by helping MB in building a house or assist him when he becomes ill, ego restores the balance.

#### Avunculate-related extensions

The avunculate is a hereditary institution: MBS takes over the avuncular responsibilities and rights from his father, ego's MB. In this way the continuity of the avunculate is guaranteed. If ego has no MB, his MBS have to arrange his marriage etc. Ego calls MB *momo* but also MBS. This means that ego treats relatives of this own generation as members of the parent generation. Both terminologically and in terms of kinship behaviour.

This cultural equivalence of MB to MBS forms the basis of a series of other avunculate-related extensions.

This concerns in the first place MBSW. Since MBS=MB, MBSW=MBW. The wife of MB is called *yeni*. Thus MBSW is also called *yeni*.

Similarly, since MBS=MB, ego treats the sisters of MBS as the sisters of MB, i.e. as ego's mother and her sisters. Thus ego calls his MBD *yeni*.

If ego treats MBD as his mother and her sisters, then it follows that he treats the husband of MBD as the husband mother and her sisters. Thus MBDH=MZH=are. Since ego treats his MBD and MBDH as members of the parent generation by calling them *yeni* and are, he treats MBDC as members of his own generation, with the sibling-terms. Thus MBDS=B and MBDD=Z. Since ego treats MBD and MBDC as parents, he treats PMBD and PMBDH as grandparents, using the appropriate terms.

For PMB and PMBW ego uses the grandparental terms since these relatives are more than one generation ascending from ego. Now since MBS=MB, PMBS=PMB. Thus ego uses *ndare* for PMBS and *ama* for PMBSW.

Accordingly, *lono* is used by PMBC and their spouses for their (spouse's) FZCC.

Previously we saw that ego treats the children of his MB as members of the parent generation (MBS=MB, MBD=MZ), although they are of his own generation. Another consequence of the equivalence MB=MBS concerns the way ego treats his FZC. These children of ego's father's sister call ego *momo* since he is their MBS. Now the male reciprocal to *momo* is *langge*. Since ego's FZC call him *momo* he calls his FZS *langge* and his FZD *khuri* or *mio*. Thus ego treats his FZC as members of the child generation,

although they are of his own generation. The cross term *langge* may only be used by a male ego when it refers to ZS since for a female ego the ZS is not a cross relative. But when *langge* is used in its avuncular extension to FZS, both male and female ego use *langge* for their FZS since in that case FZS is also for a female ego a cross relative.

#### 4. Spouse terms

A man calls his wife *la* 'wife' and a woman her husband *wabi*. Close friends and lovers may use the self-reciprocal term *nduma* 'sweetheart' (literally 'heart').

*Yale* means 'respected old man' and this term may also be used by a wife for her husband.

#### 5. Affinal terms

There are affinal terms for ego's own generation and for the parent and child generations. For the grandparental and grandchild generation, the filial terms are used in their affinal extensions.

With the exception of *khuni* the affinal terms are self-reciprocal.

The cross and parallel opposition is neutralized in the affinal terms.

The affinal terms have avunculate-related extensions which follow from the avuncular extensions of filial terms discussed in part 3 above. E.g. the affinal term *nemo* 'wife's male parent' is extended to WMBDH and WMGS since ego's wife treats her MBDH as MBS as male parents.

Parent- and child-in-law

*Nemo* 'wife's male parent/daughter's husband'

*Nemo* primarily refers to the male parents, both cross and parallel, of ego's wife (WF, WMB). Self-reciprocally *nemo* extends to DH and male ego's sister's daughter's husband (ZDH). Furthermore *nemo* is the reciprocal term to *khuni*. *Nemo* extends generationally.

Affinally *nemo* extends to WMZH and WFZH.

In part 3 we saw that MBS and MBDH are called *are*. Accordingly, WMBS and WMBDH are called *nemo*.

*Nuno* 'husband's parent/son's wife'

*Nuno* primarily refers to the parents of ego's husband, both cross and parallel and both male and female, (HF, HM, HMB, HFZ).

The term is self-reciprocal and thus also refers to SW and BSW/ZSW.

Generationally the term extends to husband's classificatory parents and classificatory son's wife and classificatory BSW/ZSW.

Affinally *nuno* extends to HFBW, HMBW, HMZH, HFZH: the affinal parents of ego's husband.

In part 3 we saw that ego treats MBD, MBDH, MBS and MBSW as members of the parent generation. Accordingly, *nuno* is extended to HMBD, HMBDH, HMBS and HMBSW: these are all parents of ego's husband by avunculate-related extension.

In all extensions (generational, affinal, avunculate-related) the term *nuno* is used self-reciprocally.

*Khuni* 'wife's female parent'

*Khuni* primarily denotes the female parents of ego's wife, both cross and parallel (WM, WFZ).

Generationally the term extends to the classificatory mothers and paternal aunts of ego's wife.

Affinally *khuni* extends to W(cl.)FBW and W(cl.)MBW.

In part 3 we saw that ego calls MBED and MBSW *yeni*. Now *khuni* also extends to W(cl.)MBD and W(cl.)MBSW.

There are Papuan languages in which there is one self-reciprocal term for a man and his parents-in-law and another self-reciprocal term for a woman and her parents-in-law (e.g. Mairasi, cf. Merrifield 1983b:294). In Kombai this neat symmetrical system is disturbed by the special relation of avoidance between a man and his WM which triggered a special term for his wife's female parents.

In Kombai there is one self-reciprocal term for a woman and her parents-in-law, but a man uses two terms: one for his wife's female parents (*khuni*) and one for his wife's male parents (*nemo*). *Khuni* is not self-reciprocal: WM/WFZ use *nemo* for their (Z)DH.

The avoidance-relation between a man and his WM is expressed as follows. A man may never use the name of his WM, not even in reference. He may not eat with her and may not stay with her in one room. The Kombai say that this avoidance expresses the respect a man has to show towards his bridegivers. Since his

*khuni* gave birth to his wife, she represents the bridegiving clan. This Kombai avoidance rule fits in the general pattern of distant and strained affinal relations which we find quite general in the cultures of Irian Jaya.

#### Siblings-in-law

*Mbei* 'sibling-in-law' primarily refers to the brothers and sisters of ego's spouse. Generationally the term is extended to include the classificatory brothers and sisters of ego's spouse, i.e. for all those for whom ego's spouse uses the sibling terms of ego's generation (i.e. the parallel kinsmen of ego's generation).

*Mbei* is a self-reciprocal term, thus referring also to the spouses of ego's siblings and classificatory siblings.

In part 3 we saw that ego uses sibling-terms for his MBDC. Now *mbei* is used for spouse's MBDC.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The Kombai kinship system is one of classificatory type. It furthermore distinguishes cross from parallel relatives.

In the filial relations the cross male parent (MB), *momo*, occupies a special position and in the affinal relations the mother-in-law (WM), *khuni*.

Kombai society is divided into patrilans. Now the MB stands for ego's mother's people and the WM for ego's bridegiving clan.

The special position of the MB in Kombai society is due to the institution of the avunculate. The avunculate has triggered a series of extensions in which generational re-interpretation takes place. The basis for this re-interpretation is the equivalence MB=MBS. Thus ego treats a member of the parent generation (MB). In this way the hereditary avunculate is expressed. Now the other avunculate-related extensions follow from the basic MB=MBS. E.g. the wife of MBS is treated as the wife of MB.

In the affinal terminology the avoidance-relation between ego and his wife's mother is reflected. A woman has one term for the relationship between her and her parents-in-law (*nuno*) but a man distinguishes female and male affinal parents. This avoidance fits in the general Irian Jaya pattern of strained affinal relations just like the special position of the MB reflects another widespread institution in this part of the world: the avunculate.

#### NOTES

1. B = brother  
D = daughter  
C = child  
F = father  
H = husband  
M = mother  
W = wife  
P = parent  
S = son  
Z = sister  
cl. = classificatory

△ = male person

○ = female person

△A ——— ○B  
: marriage of A and B

△A ——— ○B  
|  
├─── ○C  
└─── △D  
: family with C and D the children of A and B

2. Bidirectional extension corresponds to Merrifield's Extension Rule 1 (1983a:182):

"Rule 1 (square): Add P or C without limit except that given a primary kintype of an ascending generation, C may be added only once more than P is added; otherwise P may be added only as many time as C is added."

Generational extension corresponds to rule G of Merrifield (1983a:182):

"Rule G (generational) : Add P and C an equal number of times to a primary kintype."

Affinal extension is the extension of kin terms to affinal relationships (cf. Merrifield 1983a:186). For the notion of self-reciprocity cf. Merrifield (1983a:184).

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